

# VIDE<sup>E</sup>OG<sub>A</sub>ME<sup>E</sup>

# A D V I S O R

OCTOBER 1996  
\$7.95 US \$8.95 CAN

**VOLUME 2, NUMBER 10**

# *The Interactive Gaming Industry Guide*

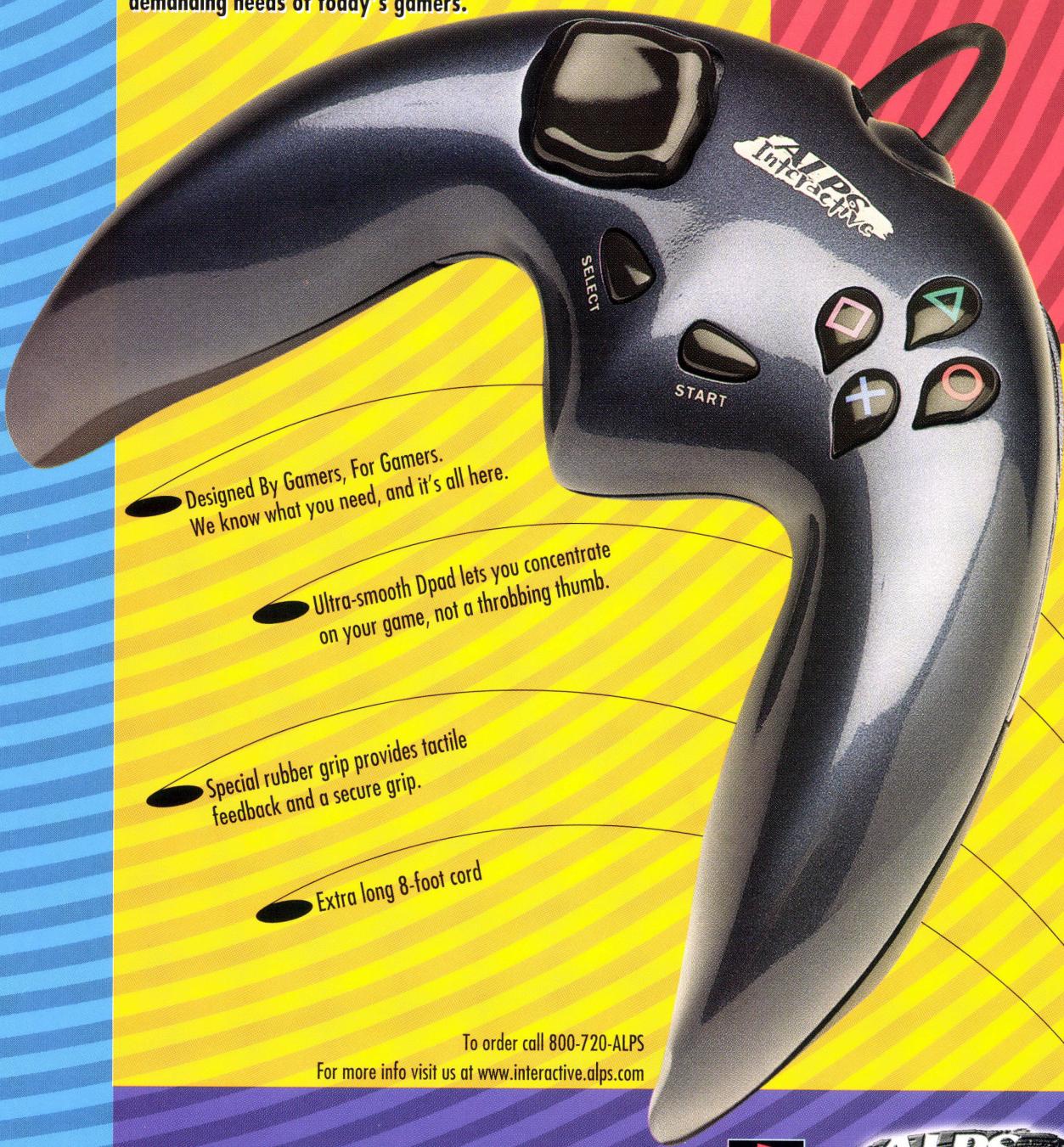


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# VIDEOGAME

A D V I S O R

OCTOBER 1996  
\$7.95 US \$8.95 CAN*The Interactive Gaming Industry Guide*

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## N64 Sales Explode on Both Sides of the Pacific

By Claire Duffy

# NINTENDO<sup>64</sup>

Sales of Nintendo's new 64-bit videogame machine have hit over the 1 million mark just 10 weeks after launch in Japan. Of the more than 1 million systems shipped to more than 20,000 Japanese retailers, more than 90% have sold though to customers.

Scheduled release for the N64 in the United States was last Sunday, September 29. Nintendo already anticipates that demand will exceed supply. "It's apparent from our conversations with our U.S. retailers that our projected shipments will be exhausted well before the holidays. We're asking our parent company to do everything possible to increase total shipments to North America," says Peter Main, Nintendo of America's executive vice president, sales and marketing. "Furthermore, it's obvious that in so-called next generation, software quality is as important as ever. We've seen Super Mario 64 purchased with vir-

tually every N64 system sold in Japan, which means it's reached one million sales quicker than any game ever debuting with a new system."

The initial U.S. shipments of Nintendo 64 are only slated for 500,000 to 600,000. Roger Goddu, president of Toys R Us, said, "We would take their entire half million to our selves. Based on customer interest from our in-store Nintendo 64 Test Drive, we could sell 125,000 on the first day alone." Another half million Nintendo 64 units are expected to replenish the market in the first three months of 1997.

Nintendo 64 went on sale in North America at a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$199.95. The flagship title, Super Mario 64, and Pilot Wings 64 were also on sale (but not readily available) that day. The European debut, however, has been tentatively scheduled for March 1997. **VGA**

## Nintendo 64: The Mother of all Product Launches

By Zach Meston

No more hype. No more missed launch dates. No more speculation. (No more sentences that begin with "no more.") As of September 29th, the Nintendo 64 is a living, breathing (and most likely an out-of-stock) item on store shelves across North America. How is this 64-bit beast going to affect videogame retailers? VGA assigned me, your humble scribe, to get some answers - and since my Magic 8-Ball was on the fritz, I ended up doing some research instead.

### Issue Numbah' One: The Price Point

There weren't any shock waves sent through the industry when Nintendo dropped the N64 from \$249.95 to \$199.95 just a few weeks before release: most pundits (my first-ever use of that word in an article - my mom is so proud) saw this as a direct and necessary response to the pennies-under-\$200 price points of the Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation respectively. George Harrison at Nintendo of America disagrees: "We

did it because we could. Companies typically lower the price of the hardware after the first holiday season; consumers are aware of that. We were driven by a desire to lower it now. The NES and SNES all sold [in large quantities] at \$125 or less."

Very true, but the price drop is still a slightly goofy gesture, since Nintendo most assuredly would've sold their initial half-million systems at \$249 or even \$299 (the price point at which the PlayStation and Saturn started, as if you didn't know that). If NOA can push through 500,000 systems within about six months, let's not forget that it would blow-away the initial sales curves of both the PlayStation and the Saturn. If they do it and still can not keep supply as high as demand, logic would dictate that Sony and Sega will prosper from the hype.

Hardware has never been more than a very minor portion of anyone's profits, whether manufacturers or retailers; but isn't Nintendo taking a bite at \$199? (One recalls the accusations of "dumping" made by now-

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## Activision Does A Deal With The Aussies

By Claire Duffy

Activision, Inc. recently entered into an exclusive deal with an Australian-based game developer, Australis Microprogramming, Ltd., to acquire the worldwide rights to a new real-time action-strategy game. According to the agreement, Activision will obtain the rights to both a sequel and another original title, in addition to licensing the game's engine technology for use with other Activision action-strategy titles.

The Acquisition represents Activision's advance into this fast-growing genre, as well as an expansion of the company's key product categories. The addition of the new action-strategy

game to Activision's fiscal year line-up further strengthens the company's position in the PC-based videogame market.

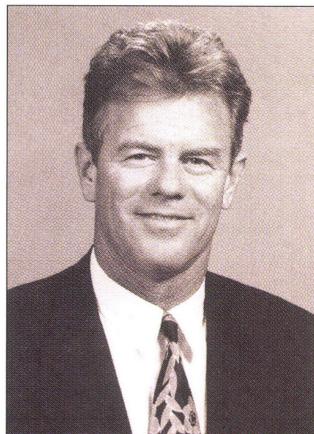
Bobby Kotick, Chairman and CEO of Activision, commented, "Action-strategy games like *Command and Conquer* and *Warcraft II* represent one of the hottest PC game categories. Australis's next-generation game design and unique engine technology will allow us to create a killer app that we believe sets new standards for the genre. This agreement underscores our commitment to aggressively seek entertainment to consumer audiences." **VGA**

## Spectrum HoloByte Names New Senior VP Of Marketing

By Erin Blackwelder

Spectrum HoloByte, Inc. announced the appointment of Derek W. McLeish to the position of senior vice president, marketing. McLeish's responsibilities include providing leadership for domestic product marketing and product public relations, inbound and outbound licensing and worldwide corporate communications.

Steve Race, chief executive officer for Spectrum HoloByte commented, "I am very pleased to continue building the company's senior management team. Derek has significant experience in the videogame business, starting back in his Atari days. He has a combination of hardware and software experience. He has depth of experience in both traditional (cartridge-based)



videogames as well as PC (based videogame) entertainment software. He will be an invaluable addition to our management team."

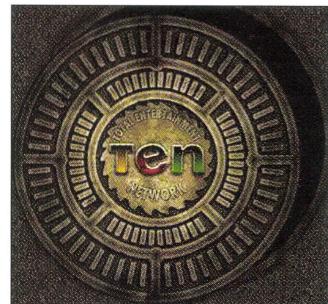
McLeish comes to Spectrum HoloByte with over 14 years' experience in the entertainment and software industry, including marketing positions at such companies as Amaze, Panavision International, Nucleus International, Monogram and Atari. **VGA**

## TEN Names Former EA Employee, Leissa Jackmauh, Account Mgr.

By Erin Blackwelder

Total Entertainment Network (TEN) has recently announced the appointment of Leissa Jackmauh as content partners' account manager. Jackmauh will be responsible for developing innovative marketing campaigns for games carried on TEN, in addition to being the liaison between TEN and videogame publishers.

Lesley Mansford, vice president of marketing for TEN, commented, "We are committed to providing the best service and marketing to our partners, and Leissa's experience will assist us in continuing to build and foster strong relationships with companies developing the finest games. In addition, her unique skill set of both marketing and product development will



provide our partners with a dedicated person who fully understands their needs."

Jakmauh was previously with Electronic Arts (EA) where she held a variety of positions, including marketing manager for affiliated labels. In this capacity, she worked with independent CD-ROM publishers to develop marketing strategies, pricing, packaging, collateral, advertising, co-marketing and promotions. **VGA**

## GT Interactive To Unveil 30 New Videogames This Holiday Season

By Claire Duffy

GT Interactive Software Corp., has announced it will be shipping more than 30 new videogames for PC's and 32-bit systems this holiday. Having completed several major acquisitions in the past months, GT has positioned itself as a multi-platform publisher to be reckoned with.

Ron Chaimowitz, president and chief executive officer of GT Interactive, stated, "We have experienced tremendous growth as a publisher and the depth of our third and fourth quarter lineup underscores that of



GT Interactive. In addition to introducing the largest number of titles in company history, we are also launching our first offerings for PlayStation and Saturn in the U.S. and believe, as do industry analysts, that we have the strongest lineup in the business." **VGA**

# Sirtech Announces Distribution Agreement With Virgin

By Erin Blackwelder

Sirtech Software, Inc. recently announced that the company has signed a distribution agreement with Virgin Interactive Entertainment - London, England. The announcement was made at last month's London European Computer Trade Show (ECTS).

The agreement calls for exclusive Pan-European distribution, excluding France and Italy, of several software products published by Sirtech Software Inc. The agreement will begin with

the distribution of Jagged Alliance - Deadly Games, Nemesis: The Wizardry Adventure, and Wizardry Gold.

Robert Sirotek, Vice President of Sirtech Software, Inc., comments, "Sirtech's agreement with Virgin brings about a major shakeup in our distribution to European countries. Virgin's aims and ideas very much resemble that of our own. We are pleased to be associated with such an admirable company." **VGA**

## QSound Labs' Law Suit Against Spatializer Finalized?

By Claire Duffy

In a hearing held last week in the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, Judge William D. Keller, in interpreting claims contained in QSound Labs' patents, ruled that the claims were not applicable to the simplest of stereo spreader circuits such as the Spatializer chips. He further stated that, in his view, Spatializer was successful in "cherry picking" the QSound invention but, as a matter of law, he had to rule in their favor. In view of this, any claim for damages made by Spatializer would receive little sympathy from Judge Keller.

David Gallagher, President & CEO of QSound Labs stated, "We are naturally disappointed in the result, but the immediate effect of this ruling is to open up the market for increased competition between 3D audio vendors at the lower-end. For

better quality digital stereo enhancement and sound positioning solution, the decision agreed with QSound's claim interpretations and therefore has ensured a strong proprietary QSound asset base for the future."

QSound Labs intends to appeal the judgment. The Court of Appeals Panel, which sits in Washington D.C., consists of 3 lawyers with experience in patent law and, as judge Keller noted, is more qualified than he to rule in this matter. In foregoing a jury trial and permitting this matter to go direct to appeal, Judge Keller has saved both parties the large expense of a jury trial and a speedier conclusion to this matter. Hearings concerning patent validity and unfair competition will not take place until the Appeal is decided. **VGA**

# Satellite Technology Enters The Gaming Fray

By Claire Duffy



LodgeNet Entertainment Corporation (renowned for their marketing of gaming services in the hotel/motel arena) has reached an agreement with US Franchise Systems. The plan calls for the company to serve as the exclusive vendor for digital satellite in-room entertainment to its franchised Microtel and Hawthorne Suite properties. Under terms of the agreement, LodgeNet will supply its "PrimeStar by LodgeNet digital free-to-guest" programming to USFS affiliated properties.

Tim C. Flynn, president and CEO of LodgeNet, commented, "We're pleased to count the US Franchise Systems rooms among our loading base. US Franchise is a rapidly expanding, quality operation, headed by one of the industry's most respected business leaders, Michael Leven. We feel this relationship will greatly benefit both of our companies. Through creative and innova-

tive franchise acquisition programs it has recently announced, US Franchise has demonstrated its commitment to growth and service to its franchisees. We're proud to be a part of their system with our in-room entertainment services."

Michael Leven, president and CEO of US Franchise stated, "We chose LodgeNet as our exclusive digital satellite vendor because it has an outstanding reputation for quality and service, two things we strongly promote within our hotel franchise base. This new relationship with LodgeNet will offer our affiliate increased value and selection while greatly improving service for the hotel guest."

There has been no official comment on how soon videogames will be introduced to the line-up; however, sources inside the company have privately stated that they have spoken with representatives from the Sega Channel. **VGA**

## Distributors Finalize Deal

By Claire Duffy

Beamscope Canada recently reported the completion of its previously announced joint venture with Sonda S.A. to form a new holding company, Sonda Beamscope S.A. This new company, based in Santiago, Chile, will merge Beamscope Chile S.A. with Sonda's two distributionsubsidiaries, Microcomputadores S.A. in Chile and Unisel S.A. in

Argentina.

Beamscope will hold 49.5% of the joint venture and will exercise joint control. The company will proportionately consolidate the results of the joint venture beginning with its next quarter. Sonda Beamscope S.A. also plans further Latin American expansion in countries beyond Chile and Argentina. **VGA**

## Two New Senior Execs Named At AnyRiver Entertainment

By Claire Duffy

AnyRiver Entertainment has named two new senior level executives, Andrew Sells as Vice President of production and Ronald Parks as Vice President of Finance. Stewart Bonn, CEO and president of the company, commented, "With more than two decades of combined industry experience, the addition of Andrew Sells and Ron Parks reinforces the company's mission of bringing aboard the best people in the industry to build a company where creative visionaries can produce exceptional entertainment titles."

With over 14 years of industry experience, Sells comes most recently from Sony Interactive Studios where he was Director of Product Development and oversaw the development of PC and PlayStation videogames. At AnyRiver,

Sells heads up a production staff of artists, designers, programmers, and producers for both in-house productions and outside developer teams. He also serves as Executive Producer on several of AnyRiver's titles.

As Vice President of Finance, Ron Parks oversees the development and management of AnyRiver's financial and administrative operations and implementation of financial plans and reports. With over 16 years of professional experience, Parks has a successful history in launching and expanding software companies. He was previously Vice President of Finance and Operations at UDI Software and held executive positions with International Microcomputer Software, Inc. and Reference Software International. **VGA**

## Former Employee Returns To The New T•HQ

By Claire Duffy

T•HQ Inc. has just announced that after a one year leave of absence, Deborah Lake has rejoined the staff as vice president of finance and administration and corporate secretary and treasurer. Lake has assumed all of the responsibilities previously held by Stefan Dietrich and resumed some activities for which she was previously responsible.

Brian J. Farell, president and CEO of T•HQ commented, "We are delighted to have Ms. Lake rejoin us

during this period of tremendous growth. Her extensive knowledge of our industry, the company, and its financial and information systems will be a great asset to T•HQ."

Lake originally joined T•HQ in June 1991, serving as controller before being promoted to vice president of finance and administration in 1995. Previously, Lake was employed by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an international audit, tax and consulting firm. **VGA**

## The Web's Official Yellow Pages for Gaming Launched

By Mark Benoit

What many have called the World Wide Web's "Official Yellow Pages for the gaming industry," Video Games On-Line (VGOL), was successfully launched last month with unprecedented success. The new property is the latest in Cyberactive Publishing's product offerings and a sister-company to VGA.

As mentioned in a previous editorial, VGOL is perhaps best described as an Internet Search Site similar to the larger non-specific sites such as Yahoo, Alta Vista and Excite. The most preeminent difference is that VGOL is game industry specific, containing hundreds of links to each sector of the trade.

In addition to a projected 50 standard print-related articles, the company is also conducting image and awareness advertising in the most respected game enthusiast publications. What this has culminated in thus far, just one month, is almost 100,000 visitors, a growing statistic which the most respected name in auditing,



ABC, will back-up on a monthly basis.

Publisher and Founder Hal Halpin commented, "Researching, marketing and launching VGOL was a tremendous undertaking... the product of nine months of strategic planning and four months of assembly, but our first month's statistics made it all worth while. Both the consumer and industry response to the product have been very gratifying, and we look forward to VGOL's continued growth and success."

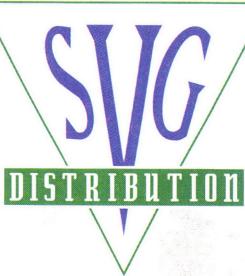
The site has recently added some new features worthy of mention, including a New Product Release Schedule, a Now Hiring section and a licensed dedicated search engine. **VGA**

## Sega GameWorks Recruits Michael Montgomery

By Claire Duffy

Sega GameWorks, a joint venture between Sega Enterprises Ltd., DreamWorks SKG and MCS Inc., has appointed Michael Montgomery president and chief operation officer. Montgomery was previously employed by DreamWorks, where he led the project to

build the company's planned studio at Playa Vista, in addition to raising the studio's equity capital. Prior to DreamWorks, he was at the Walt Disney Company from 1987 to 1995, where he served as the company's vice president and treasurer. **VGA**



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# Nancy Tully Named VP of Corp. Communications For Acclaim

By Claire Duffy

Acclaim Entertainment recently announced the appointment of Nancy Tully as vice president, Corporate Communications. Tully will be responsible for the worldwide communications for the company, including corporate and financial public relations as well as product PR for the company's host of interactive entertainment titles.

Robert Holmes, president and chief operating officer of Acclaim, stated, "We are pleased to have Nancy join the Acclaim team. She comes to us with years of experience and expertise in both communications and technology. Her extensive knowledge, vast media contacts and proven track record will be tremendously



effective in our ongoing efforts to further extend the awareness of our company."

Prior to joining Acclaim, Tully served five years at Symbol Technologies as director of Corporate Public Relations, where she developed and implemented strategic media campaigns for the company's technology-based products in general, business, trade and electronic outlets. Ms. Tully holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. **VGA**

## DVD-Video To Finally Launch... In Japan

By Chris McGowen

The DVD format may be bogged down in the U.S. by copy-protection concerns, but Matsushita Electric Industrial will start selling DVD-Video players in Japan in November, along with an expected software library of 40-60 titles. Two machines - priced at 79,800 yen (approx. \$740) and 98,000 yen (\$900) - will be launched November 1, followed by the introduction of a Matsushita widescreen TV with a built-in DVD player on November 15. The players will incorporate copy-protection technology developed by Matsushita. The company intends to initially produce 30,000 players per month; it was not revealed

where the first software titles will come from.

Meanwhile, regarding the American launch, contradictory statements have been sent out by Matsushita (which sells the Panasonic, Technics and Quasar brands), Toshiba, Pioneer and Thomson. All have said that they hoped to have players out in the U.S. by Christmas but also that they would not announce marketing plans until the copy protection issue is resolved (legislation in Congress is unlikely before spring). Sony announced on Aug. 26 that it definitely would not introduce a DVD-Video player in the U.S. before spring. **VGA**

# Ziff-Davis Acquires Assets Of Videogames Magazine

By Erin Blackwelder

Ziff-Davis Consumer Media Group announced that it has acquired assets of Videogames magazine from LFP, Inc., including its list of subscribers. Videogames will cease publication after the September 1996 issue, and subscriptions to the magazine will be fulfilled by Electronic Gaming Monthly, which is published by Ziff-Davis. This will provide unexpected bonus circulation to advertisers in Electronic Gaming Monthly and EMG2, which are sold as a package.

J. Scott Briggs, President of the Ziff-Davis Consumer Media Group, said "Today's acquisition of Videogames' circulation file indicates just how serious we are about the videogame and electronic entertainment

market. When we acquired the Sendai Publishing Group and Decker Publications back in May, we said we planned to expand Electronic Gaming Monthly and Sendai's other core magazines. Today's investment is just another indication of how confident we are of this category's long-term growth."

Jim Kohls, president of LFP added, "We decided to take advantage of current market conditions and sell the assets of Videogames to Ziff-Davis and focus our attention in this segment on our other title, Tips & Tricks. The readers of Videogames will be well served by Electronic Gaming Monthly, which is the pre-eminent leader in its field." **VGA**

## CGDA Names New Executive Director

By Claire Duffy

The Computer Game Developers' Association (CGDA) named Steven G. Peterson as Executive Director of the CGDA. "We're very pleased to have Steve Peterson heading the CGDA," said Ernest Adams, Chairman of the CGDA Board of Directors. "We had a field of excellent candidates to choose from, but Steve has all the right skills to lead the CGDA as it undergoes the rapid growth period ahead."

Mr. Peterson has been in the interactive entertainment industry for years. He is an award-winning game designer and writer as well as a marketing consultant. He co-founded Hero Games in 1981, worked in product marketing for Electronic Arts

from 1986-1988, and since that time has been a freelance marketing consultant, game designer and writer.

"The interactive entertainment business has become a multi-billion dollar industry," said Steve Peterson. "An industry that size needs strong professional organization, and the CGDA was formed to meet that need. I'm excited to have this opportunity to enhance the profession of interactive entertainment design."

The Computer Game Developers' Association is the professional society of the interactive entertainment, educational software, and multimedia industry, with over 1300 members. **VGA**

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**MIDWAY**

# Nintendo Markets Three Disney Classics

By Claire Duffy

Nintendo of America Inc. and Disney Interactive have announced the release of three video-games based on classic Disney characters for the 16-bit SNES. Nintendo will market Pinocchio, Maui Mallard in Cold Shadow and Toy Story for distribution in North America this fall.

Peter Main, Nintendo of America's executive vice president, sales and marketing, stated, "This is an exciting opportunity to work with Disney to bring these three wonderful stories featuring beloved characters into American homes via our widely popular 16-bit videogame system. Pinocchio, Buzz Lightyear and Disney's latest star Maui Mallard now join with Nintendo's family of charac-



ters to give game players of all ages a fun-filled, 16-bit holiday season this year."

Marc Teren, vice president, Disney Interactive, commented, "We are delighted with the opportunity to work with Nintendo to bring new Disney titles for Super NES systems to market. This agreement allows Disney and Nintendo to reach the all-family audience in the broadest way possible and guarantee the availability of fresh, top-quality 16-bit entertainment in years to come." **VGA**

## Thomson's DVD Macrovision 7.0 Chip Pirate-proof?

By Chris McGowen

SGS-Thomson Microelectronics announced last month that it had developed an integrated circuit that protects digital video systems from copyright piracy - a problem which has plagued the electronic entertainment industry for years. The chip, called Macrovision 7.0, modifies the video signal so that it can be viewed on a television but not recorded clearly on a VCR. It meets the 7.0 standard put forth by Macrovision Corp., a company that develops and markets technologies that protect video, audio, and data in both prerecorded and electronically transmitted formats from unauthorized

viewing and recording.

"Our product alleviates the concerns of copyright owners," said Aldo Romano, corporate VP and GM of SGS-Thomson's Dedicated Products Group. "As well as meeting requirements defined by members of the American Consumer Electronics Manufacturer's Association (CEMA) and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the chip is available in time for the development of DVD products, which will be introduced this year." The Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA) has yet to become involved in this arena of copyright protection. **VGA**

# Molofilm Communications Acquires ReadySoft

By Claire Duffy

Molofilm Communications of Canada recently announced the acquisition of ReadySoft Incorporated, of Toronto. The acquisition is being financed through a combination of cash and 117,057 class B Subordinace voting shares of Molofilm Communications plus a potential earn-out payable in shares.

Robert J. Hogan, President and Chief Operating Officer of Molofilm Communications stated, "The addition of ReadySoft's production slate and sales infrastructure to our existing multimedia activities will create one of the largest, fully-integrated interactive digital media developers and publishers in Canada. We will now have interactive products available on almost



every platform and access to distribution worldwide."

ReadySoft's president, David Foster, will manage all the entertainment software publishing activities, as well as oversee certain development and production functions. Yves Dion, President of Molofilm Distribution, commented, "We moved very quickly last year into the multimedia sector in Canada, and the addition of ReadySoft's sales and marketing team will reinforce our position as one of the leading publishers of entertainment software titles in the country." **VGA**

## GT's Marketing Scheme... Buy 2, Get 1 Free

By Claire Duffy

GT Interactive Software Corp. is launching "Game Therapy," a broad-based promotion offering consumers the opportunity to purchase two games and receive a third game free from a selection of GT Interactive titles. The promotion will run from November through the "key holiday selling season."

"We believe our 'Game Therapy' promotion is perfectly timed vehicle for a retailer sell-through and an excellent way for consumers to obtain some of the most sought after titles today," said Holly Newman, vice president of Marketing for GT Interactive.

A multi-million dollar campaign, "Game Therapy" incorporates 24 of the company's premier titles including Amok, an intense mech-

styled action game from Scavenger; Zombie's ZPC, an apocalyptic first-person shooter; Bedlam, a futuristic 3-D, top-down shooter; and Final DOOM, the last chapter in the epic id Software series. Other popular titles include Ultimate DOOM and Heretic: Shadow of the Serpent Riders.

GT Interactive's "Game Therapy" promotion is backed by a multi-tiered marketing campaign which includes Extensive print ads in PC-oriented videogame, family and lifestyle publications; demo CD's polybagged with top industry magazines; in store merchandising, including shelf-talkers, standees and posters; a dedicated on-line mini-site within GT's Web site and a direct e-mail campaign. **VGA**



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## Micro Star Software Sues GT Interactive

By Claire Duffy

Micro Star recently filed a lawsuit against GT Interactive Software after claiming to receive reports from Micro Star's major vendors complaining of intimidation and threats of legal action by GT Interactive Software - after GTI supposedly ignored a "cease and desist" letter from Micro Star's legal counsel. The lawsuit seeks a decision by the federal court in San Diego, California that GTI cannot threaten legal action against Micro Star's vendors based upon their sales of Micro Star's popular *Nuke It* compilation of add-on levels for *Duke Nukem 3D*. The lawsuit also seeks an award of millions in damages as a result of GTI's attempts to prevent vendors from selling *Nuke It* and monopolizing the market.

GTI filed a countersuit against Micro Star, claiming that the *Nuke It* compilation infringed on its copyright to *Duke Nukem 3D* and that consumers would be confused over whether *Nuke It* was authorized or sponsored by GTI. Micro Star and its legal counsel have reviewed the countersuit and strongly believe that it is completely without merit.

Stephen Benedict, President and founder of Micro Star Software, commented, "We see *Nuke It* as a tool to increasing long-term play of *Duke Nukem 3D* and benefiting GTI. GTI's false allegations and interference with Micro Star's business have threatened sales of this product to our key vendors. It's obvious that GTI wants to monopolize this market." **VGA**

## Nimbus Ramps Up DVD Production

By Chris McGowen

Nimbus CD International, a leading compact disc manufacturer, has announced the production of its first DVD disc, on September 13 at the firm's plant in Charlottesville, Virginia. As of now, Nimbus offers a full range of in-house DVD production, including mastering, manufacturing and packaging. The company will initially focus on producing 4.7 GB and 9.4 GB single-layer discs, and its newly commissioned manufacturing lines will have an annual capacity of 3.5 million DVD discs.

"This is a milestone in the company's history," said Nimbus chairman and CEO Lyndon Faulkner. "Nimbus must be the first independent company in the world capable of actually manufacturing DVD and DVD-ROM discs. We

are thrilled to be ahead of the pack, along with Warner Brothers, in supplying our existing and new customers with the services to develop their product on DVD."

"Being DVD-ready this early in the game puts us in an excellent position to serve the market's earliest adopters and ensures our competitive lead in terms of experience in producing the service," added David Trudel, Nimbus executive VP of operations. Nimbus established one of the first CD manufacturing facilities in 1982 and currently has operations in Charlottesville, Provo, Sunnyvale, and the U.K. The company is also expected to service the DVD replication needs of several key video-game manufacturers. **VGA**

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Carefully blending challenging combat with puzzles and exploration, Resident Evil, on the PlayStation, offers a truly terrifying experience that sucks you in and won't let you up for air. —*Washington Post*

★★★★★ Revolutionary. With liberal amounts of action, challenging gameplay, smooth control and plenty of genuine scares, this is one game nobody should be without. —*Next Generation*

Resident Evil is, plain and simple, a masterpiece, one of the best games available for the PlayStation—or any system, for that matter. I don't say this often, but if you have a PlayStation, you have to have Resident Evil. —*Associated Press*

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# DVD Gets A Boost From Leading Desktop Manufacturers

**By Chris McGowen**

Apple Computer and IBM Interactive Media have joined the DVD Production Alliance, a development that is expected to help bring DVD-ROM videogames and other content closer to reality.

According to a September 11 report from the "Business Wire" news service, Sonic Solutions president Bob Doris said, "Apple's and IBM's move to join the DVD Production Alliance will jump-start DVD-ROM title development and rapidly expand the market opportunity for game and entertainment developers."

"DVD will redefine what people expect to see and hear from ROM titles. With Sonic DVD Creator, we can



build on our years of compression and multimedia services and deliver the next generation of interactive video and titles," commented Steve Wilkinson, Segment Manager - Digital Video Services at IBM Interactive Media, in the article. Apple senior vice president, Satjiv Chahil, added, "The computer industry and the entertainment industry are working towards a common goal - the easy distribution of high-quality video and audio. We think it's critical to use Sonic Solutions' DVD Creator to put our developers on the fast track to delivering DVD titles." **VGA**

# Nintendo And Kellogg Team-Up In N64 Promotion

**By Mark Benoit**

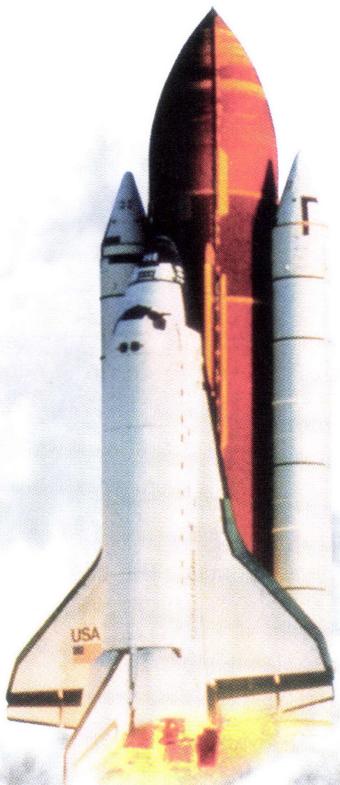
Nintendo of America Inc. and the Kellogg Company will jointly sponsor a multi-million dollar instant win sweepstakes. The sweepstakes is intended as a promotional vehicle for the launch of Nintendo 64, perhaps the most anticipated console unit in this writer's memory.

According to the two companies, there will be four Grand Prize winners who will be treated to a neighborhood Nintendo block party. Arriving at the party will be a specially outfitted trailer truck chock full of Nintendo 64 units for guests to play throughout the day. Grand Prize winners will also receive their own Nintendo 64 for keeps along with Super Mario 64.

In addition to Grand Prizes, there will be thousands of runner-up prizes. 2,000 First Prize winners will

receive a Nintendo 64 along with a Super Mario 64 cartridge. 6,400 Second Prize winners will receive a 12-month subscription to Nintendo Power magazine, along with Super Power Club membership which entitles holders to a number of valuable discounts and coupons. Third Prize winners will number about 24,000 and will receive Nintendo 64 hologram watches. Finally, there will be 1.4 million Kellog/ Nintendo phone cards awarded as fourth prizes. So, you can expect your customers, awareness level to be high.

The promotion is well supported with a comprehensive media campaign which includes television advertising, newspaper inserts, in-store media activities and full page ads in Nintendo Power magazine. **VGA**



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## Aristo Names Glenn Sblendorio As C.F.O.

By Claire Duffy

Aristo International Corp. recently announced the appointment of Glenn P. Sblendorio as chief financial officer. Sblendorio joins the team of game industry pioneers at Aristo including Nolan Bushnell, whose creating of *Pong* and founding of Atari is typically credited with launching the videogame revolution in the 1970's.

Aristo President and Chief Executive Officer, Moull Cohen, commented, "Glenn's vast experience on both the national and international fronts will greatly enhance our plans to build a



global company."

Sblendorio, 40, comes to Aristo from Sony Interactive Entertainment, Inc. where he served three years as senior vice president and chief financial officer. Previously, he had a long tenure with a multi-national company. **VGA**

## Jupiter Study Finds That On-Line Videogaming Is The Future

By Claire Duffy

According to the latest report, published by Jupiter Communications, the on-line and Internet games market will grow rapidly over the next few years, becoming a revenue source to be reckoned with in the scope of the videogame industry. The on-line and Internet games market represent merely 2.5% of overall on-line/Internet industry revenues for 1996, but is expected to increase to over 11% of total industry revenues by the year 2000.

Revenues in the on-line and Internet videogames market will be derived from a variety of sources, including pay-per-hour charges, advertising on gaming-related Web

sites, subscription, and pay-per-play revenues. In this market, users do not need to purchase a videogame to play it, as they would in the boxed games market. Consumers are willing to pay as they go to play a title online, similar to the way the market for coin-operated games has developed.

Jupiter estimates that revenues from pay-per-play charges and advertising, which each accounted for one percent or less of the market revenues in 1995, will account for 37% and 25% of the total on-line and Internet videogames market revenues by the year 2000. **VGA**

## Sierra To Market Rendition's 3-D Graphics Board

By Mark Benoit

Sierra On-Line, Inc., one of the largest videogame publishers on the PC, has announced that it will begin marketing an affordable 3D add-in board based on Rendition's Verite Graphics Engine. The company believes that this "reasonably priced hardware solution" will drastically increase the level of 3D performance for PC gamers and multimedia aficionados.

"Sierra's selection of Verite as 'the platform' for their first 3D graphics board is an enormous vote of confidence in Rendition's technology," said Mike Boich, President and CEO of Rendition. In fact, Sierra has been working closely

with Rendition for over two years. It was in April of this year that Sierra endorsed the Verite 3D Graphics engine.

Ken Williams, Chairman and CEO of Sierra stated that, "there has been a lot of chatter about how great 3D is, but when I played the 'hardware accelerated' versions of games on various cards they didn't seem any better than what Sierra was doing in software. Then I played IndyCar on Rendition's accelerator and I couldn't believe my eyes." It was this positive impression, coupled with Sierra's desire to be an industry leader that led to the new add-in board agreement. "Up until now the

Sierra On-Line

cards with real 3D power have not been available to gamers and have created a lot of confusion in the market about what a great card can do to a PC game. I want Sierra customers to have premium experience at the lowest cost possible. The only option was to bring our experience, reputation, and size to bear on the market and introduce the best premium 3D card at the lowest cost possible" con-

tinued Williams.

Manufactured by Canopus Corporation, the new board will be sold through Sierra's extensive retail channels. Expect pricing and availability information later this quarter. Retailers seeking more timely or additional information can contact Sierra's sales department directly or visit their web site(<http://www.sierra.com>). **VGA**

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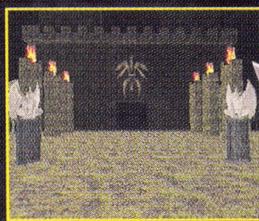
I've only played King's Field four days, and it has blown me away. I bought my PlayStation in hopes of games like this. I can't wait for the sequel. Nice work. --Brockton, Massachusetts.

Since I purchased King's Field, I have already completed the game, and loved every minute of it! I experienced the sensations of fear from surprise by monsters and actually being afraid of heights! Keep it up, bring on the sequel!! --Anderson, California.

Excellent game, great fun, kept me hooked for hours, and I still couldn't stop playing. Make another. --Rockport, Maine.

I average 4-5 hours playing this great game after work. I am losing sleep, but can't put it away. -- Somerville, Massachusetts.

I really am thankful for ASCII to take time and translate a great role playing game for the PlayStation. I only hope there will be more to come. --Rock Hill, SC.



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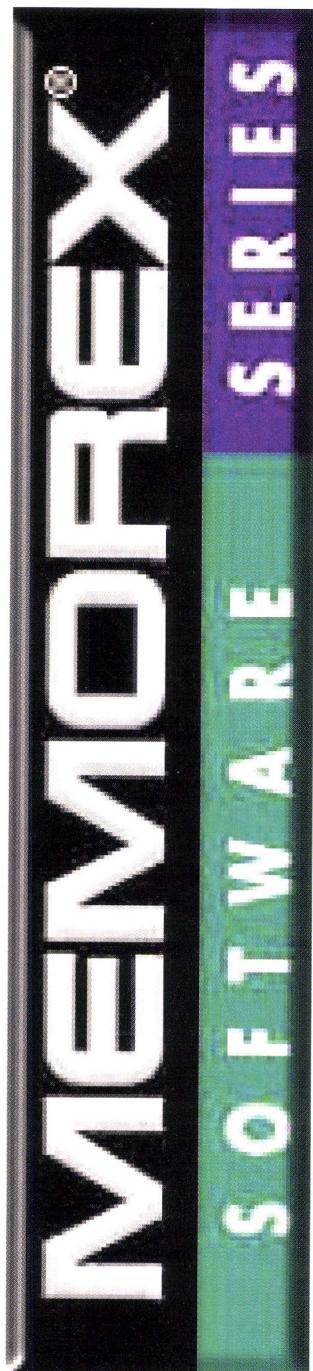
--PSExtreme

PUBLISHED BY	RELEASE DATE	
ASCII Entertainment	Halloween '96	
SYSTEM	THEME	
PlayStation	Action/Adventure	
# OF PLAYERS	SIZE	% COMPLETE
1	CD-ROM	95%

# Is It Multimedia Or Is It Memorex - Or Both?

## The VGA Multimedia Review

By Geoff Wulf



In 1995, Memorex began publishing a new line of value-priced multimedia product, now 28 titles strong and growing, through their exclusive distributor, N-TK Entertainment Technology. Some of you may have seen or even sold copies of their initial releases, among them, *Battlefield Warriors*, the *Dark Passages* series, and *Mud Pies*, a collection of multimedia and games including *Mario: the early years* and *Shelly Dwall's It's A Bird's Life*.

At E3, N-TK and Memorex released four storybook titles into their prolific line: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Gulliver's Travels*. In the next few weeks, we'll be seeing four new titles on retail shelves, and VGA has the scoop for you on each of them. Please remember that the "VGA multimedia ratings" assume an existing market for multimedia in your company.



### Bug Explorers

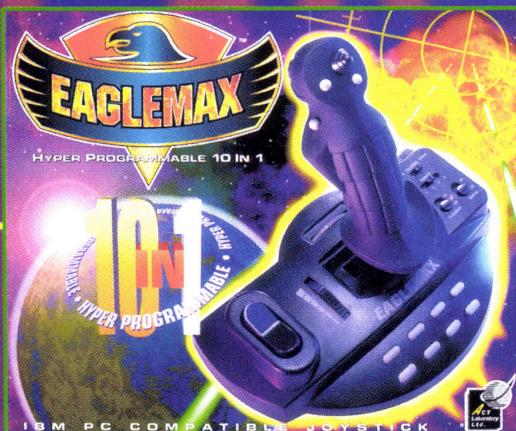
**Platform:** Hybrid  
**Genre:** Edutainment  
**Size:** CD  
**Available:** Now  
**SRP:** \$34.99  
**VGA Rating:** B+

The flagship title for their fall release line-up, *Bug Explorers* is one of the most fully featured children's titles I've ever seen, and it appeals to the bug-fetish we all go through as part of growing up. The simple interface lets you select from 9 different insect hosts who lead you through a multitude of activities such as Winston the Walking Stick's bug facts; Daddy-o Spider's art workshop; Buzz the

Bee's spelling tutor; and Ladybug's vintage cartoons, including screen stars like Betty Boop. This product is far too versatile for me to cover all of its features in the limited space I have here, but I guarantee it has something for everyone. This is not a product you're likely to see returned because of dissatisfaction.

My test team this month, 7 children from a local day-care, absolutely loved it, and I was called-in for an encore performance. Judged on quality alone, this product would easily earn an A, but there are other considerations that any retailer will want to take into consideration. The price is moderately low but still high enough to make the average consumer, in this case, the parent, think a little longer about purchasing. This, coupled with the fact that Memorex is still building a name in the multimedia field, might make unassisted and unsupported sales slow. A little time on the sales floor, however, and possibly a running demo, would go a long way to countering any drawbacks. I can honestly say that, for this title, any effort you put into its sale to the proper demographic will be a service to your customer.

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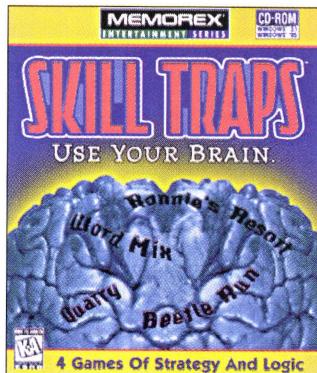
- Corporate advertising in Game Pro, Computer Gaming World, EGM, and EGM 2.



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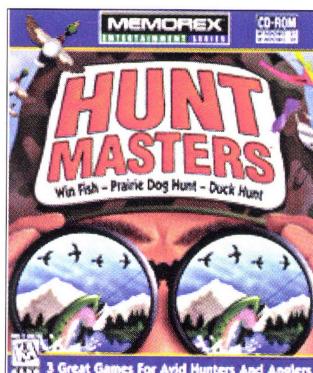


### Skill Traps

Platform: Windows 3.1, Win 95  
 Genre: Edutainment  
 Size: CD  
 Available: Now  
 SRP: \$14.95  
 VGA Rating: B

This is a simple title sporting four puzzle games: *Beetle Run*, in which you guide a ladybug through a maze by rotating corridors; *Quarry*, a game that pits the player against the computer in a race to get your workers across the playfield (sort of a cross between checkers and lemmings); *Ronnie's Resort*, where you must guide Ronnie from his hotel to the beach, overcoming obstacles like water sprinklers, beach balls, and hedges; and *Word Max*, a simple word seek puzzle.

None of these games is terribly impressive alone, but all of them on one CD for a very reasonable price is enticing. Many games within this price range usually rate just above three-week-old egg salad, but *Skill Traps* is an easy exception and comes highly recommended. With a little suggestive selling, this and other similar titles would make great impulse items and a handy upsell to raise that elusive dollars-per-transaction.

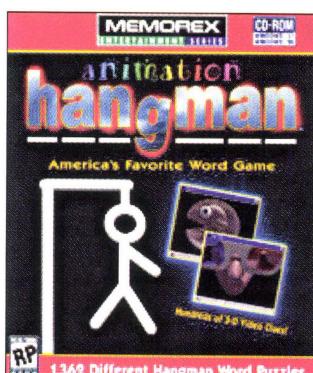


### Hunt Masters

Platform: Windows 3.1, Win 95  
 Genre: Edutainment  
 Size: CD  
 Available: Now  
 SRP: \$14.95  
 VGA Rating: C-

Mostly because of the enjoyment I received from the other Memorex titles, I tried hard to find something I enjoyed about *Hunt Masters*. The best I can afford it is a mark for decent graphics and one for so-so sound, but none of the games were captivating past the ten minute mark. It consists of three recycled arcade titles: *Prairie Dog Hunt*, *Win Fish*, and *Duck Hunt*. *Prairie Dog Hunt* is an enhanced version of that Bop-the-Gopher machine you see in arcades from time to time. The only difference is that players have an expanded play field that they actually have to scroll across to find the varmints, and it gives gamers a choice of ammunition ranging from pellets to buck-shot. *Win Fish* might appeal to some, but after a long battle with my pole and bait configuration and an equally long wait with the line in the water, I never once saw even the slightest indication of fish below the surface of my virtual lake. *Duck Hunt* is just that. A simple skeet shoot that is scarcely evolved from Nintendo's cartridge version. Perhaps with a light gun this title might captivate the player, but the mouse control was nothing more than frustrating.

If you have room and believe in the low price, feel free to include this product in your inventory. As I've always said, it never hurts to bring just one in. But don't count on this one leaping off your shelves any time soon.



### Animation Hangman

Platform: Windows 3.1, Win 95  
 Genre: Edutainment  
 Size: CD  
 Available: Now  
 SRP: \$14.95  
 VGA Rating: B-

For what it is, this title doesn't seem worth even the low price attached to it, but it is, however, an addictive and enjoyable game. It's simply hangman as we all know it, with a little computer-animated hint preceding each puzzle. There are few options in the game's configuration, but it doesn't seem to require much in the way of personalization. The visual interface is pleasant, and it's all mouse controlled. The graphics are outstanding, and an animated pencil keeps track of your score.

Not much more than a time-killer, this title will probably not scream off the shelves, but it's not a bad filler. You might even do well if you can get the store browsers hooked on a demo copy. Purchase carefully, but you could do far worse than this title as an add-on product.



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- Direct mail campaign
- Strategy Guide book published at game release
- Star Gladiator full-size poster promotion
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#### PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

GAME TYPE	3-D FIGHTING
NUMBER OF PLAYERS	1 or 2 PLAYERS
DEMOGRAPHICS	MALE 12-34
CD-ROM DISCS	1
AVAILABILITY	4TH QUARTER
STOCK NUMBER	21018
PACKAGE HEIGHT	125 mm
PACKAGE WIDTH	140 mm
SPINE WIDTH	10 mm
CASE PACK	12
CASE WEIGHT	Approx. 4 lbs.
RATING LOGO	(TEEN)
UPC CODE:	0-13388-21018-3



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#### KEY FEATURES

- Fighting game masters CAPCOM deliver amazing realism and precise control in this 3-D sci-fi weapon battle
- Outrageous, beautifully realistic original 3-D characters: Zelkin, the Bird-man armed with a wicked beak and razor-sharp claws; the alien cone-head Saturn with his crazy and deadly yo-yo weaponry; Ringal, the half-human/half-dinosaur mutant with volcano-fire spitting jaws; and the mad wizard Gore who can grow to heights beyond the screen's capacity
- Three-dimensional fighting arenas and backgrounds in space including rotating satellite dishes and spaceships roaring by in battle pursuit
- Intense gameplay with hundreds of weapon attacks such as "Plasma" Combos, the "Plasma" Strike (a once-per-match last resort) and the "Plasma" Final, the ultimate super combo
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# VGA Spotlight: Nichimen Graphics

By Geoff Wulf

24  
OCT  
1996



**Q.** Who is the first company you think of when someone says "videogames?"

**A.** Probably Nintendo, Sega, Sony, or, if you have pleasant memories of the seventies, even Atari. Well, unlike years gone-by, first-party hardware manufacturers are only part of the story in today's videogame marketplace. The increasing complexity of both software and hardware demands constantly evolving methods of producing quality titles across multiple platforms in reasonably short amounts of time.

To answer this need, first party manufacturers' have, for some time, been producing developer's kits - systems that assist third-parties in the creation and adaptation of their games for the associated hardware. But it doesn't end there. For a long time, dozens of third-party development tools, like those created by Nichimen Graphics, have existed for a variety of videogame platforms, most prominently, the PC. These systems remove a great deal of the burden from the hardware manufacturers as well as provide a neutral worktable for the software developer.

Recently, Hollywood has been brought into close association with videogames, especially with the demand for full motion video and superior graphics, so it's not surprising that many of these developers, tools come direct from the movie industry. The most visible of these is Silicon Graphics, whose SGI workstations have been fundamental in the creation of 3D effects for the '90's most popular games; and, thanks to highly publicized movies such as *Jurassic Park*, the SGI label has been successfully used as a promotional tool at retail.

But SGI is a long way from monopolizing the industry. Another company, also with its origins in movie special effects, Nichimen Graphics, is quickly swallowing large portions of the market with licensees of N-World, its developer's tool suite, to Sony, Square, Nintendo, Sega, Acclaim, and Electronic Arts (UK).

## Corporate Background

Nichimen Graphics, based in Los Angeles, CA, is owned by Nichimen Corp., a \$62.5 billion trading company. In 1995, N-World was first released to the American developer's market with outstanding success. Nichimen has focused its development tools in the area of three-dimensional, real time interactivity. With a clear vision of its target, the company has honed its resources in the invention of innovative methods to "improve the work flow of the artists." To this end, N-World is

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additionally designed to interface smoothly with all gaming platforms, including two specific features: N64 Express and Saturn Express, exporting programs that transfer data seamlessly to the appropriate system. This feature alone gives it high marks over simple modeling applications or first-party development tools. Nichimen is also working proactively to create a broader range of platform-specific converters in "pursuit of its multiple target export strategy". A Windows NT version is expected in mid 1997.

This past April was a big month for Nichimen, witnessing two major license agreements just prior to the E3. Mid-month, Nichimen and Nintendo signed an agreement that would provide N-World tools to N64 developers, including an N64-specific toolset and a number of optional modules. The agreement came after Nichimen's N-World tools had already been used to model the characters on the N64's first game, Super Mario 64. According to Nintendo's chairman, Howard Lincoln, the N64 will set new standards in game play, and he cites Nichimen as one of the industry leaders that will get them there. One of the major tools developed by Nichimen is a previewer that allows developers to instantly view models and animation for the N64. "Once content is approved," says Nichimen president Koichi Kobayashi, "our software products make the information useful to the game developer much faster."

Less than a week later, Nichimen signed an agreement with Acclaim over Acclaim's 3D character engine technology. The combination of the two technologies and Nichimen's "productization" of the system will further enhance developer productivity across all major platforms by integrating Acclaim's motion capture technology, a system that creates smooth, realistic animation for game characters. In addition, the partnership resulted in a color reduction module to easily accommodate the vast range of platform capability.

"We selected Nichimen Graphics because, in our opinion, they provide

the very best development tools for the game industry," said Acclaim's VP of advanced technology, Wes Trager, in a recent interview. "They are focused on the industry and listen to what it wants."

### Continued Growth & Support

In July, the United Kingdom's division of Electronic Arts joined the Nichimen team to further enhance the profile of N-World's capabilities. The new technology would allow developers to use any skin model with any motion capture data, removing tedious conversion and rewriting steps, and adding overall to the motion capture capabilities of the system. According to EA, Nichimen had led the industry in motion capture technology and now has taken a huge leap forward through licenses and partnerships, singling them out as the top production-aid company in the business. "NGI demonstrated their openness to listen and work together with EA to improve motion capture implementation within NGI," says EA's senior software engineer, Gary Roberts. "NGI has a dedicated focus on the game industry; we believe in its strategy and in the future it offers to us both."

### The Bottom Line

First-party manufacturer tools are becoming less and less of a necessity and more a minor component in game development. Development companies are growing as a business, and with the coming of the Digital Versatile Disk (DVD), soft launching this fall, production aids will become increasingly more important to both you and the consumer. Nichimen has recognized this and has taken steps to create a developer-friendly environment in a world where technology tends to work against them. It's partnerships like these and Nichimen's own unique development system and willingness to adapt that are making this company the hands-down leader in the industry for cross-platform real-time production tools. **VGA**



*"We selected  
Nichimen Graphics  
because, in our  
opinion they  
provide the very  
best development  
tools for the game  
industry...  
They are focused  
on the industry  
and listen to  
what it wants."*

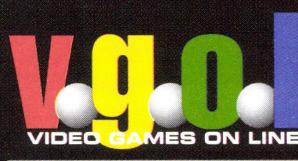
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defunct Atari Corp. against its Japanese rivals.) Harrison: "We've never sold hardware at a loss; we'll make a modest profit from each system." Modest, indeed.

One last point on the subject: true mass market (a number subjectively quoted in the millions) for dedicated videogame hardware has a real and proven price point, \$100. In the past year we have heard the terms "mass market" and "sell-to" thrown around as matters of fact, but the reality of the respective installed user bases is often vastly different than what we hear.

### Issue Numbah' Two: The "Shortage"

The puny Stateside allotment of a mere half-million N64 units for the holiday

season - although  
Nintendo is shooting  
for a million units  
sold-through retail  
channels  
(not sold-  
to, mind  
you)

by the end of  
the fiscal year in

March - has everyone  
frustrated. Even this  
weaselly journalist considered  
taking the risk of buying a  
hugely expensive (and  
believe me, they are)  
Japanese unit that may or  
may not play American car-  
tridges. (The answer,  
according to Nintendo, is  
"not.") Aren't retailers going to  
have coast-to-coast coronaries trying  
to get this sucker in stock?

Nintendo's \$50 million ad campaign,  
reams of hype in both consumer and trade mags  
and - less we not forget - Nintendo's  
Watchtower-like house organ, *Nintendo Power*,  
have driven Nintendo loyalists into a frenzy.

During one of the rare occasions I was let



out of the basement for some sunlight, I witnessed a frustrated young family at the local Software Etc. venting on the poor manager over the lack of N64s (the store already had a huge waiting list). The mom said, and I paraphrase: "It's annoying to have my kid so worked up, then break his heart by not getting him what he wants for Christmas more than anything." (Actually, the kid himself was a bit annoying, but I digress.) The fate of this family's holiday season may also rest upon how quickly Neo-Star - the parent company of Software Etc. and Babbages - can reorganize in Chapter 11, and for that matter, if the chains are still on NOA's initial ship list.

This isn't the first time Nintendo has suffered a shortage of product: veteran retailers and gamers will recall the "chip shortage" that limited production of NES cartridges during that system's glory days, raising demand for some games (including Nintendo's own *Super Mario Bros. 2*) to Cabbage Patch Kid-esque levels.

Harrison says this about Nintendo's distribution strategy: "We always worked very closely with retailers. A few of them told us they could save us the trouble [of distribution] and take the half-million units themselves, but we had to make sure we could control the distribution. We have roughly 15 customers that account for 80% of our business, and our distribution will follow the historical pattern: toy stores, then software stores, and on down."

A brief conversation with my Publisher confirmed that the widely accepted number for all platforms in distribution is, "the top twenty retailers account for approximately 79% of the sell-through in our industry... the remaining 21% are comprised of electronics chains, software specialty retailers, computer stores, medium-sized mass merchants, discount clubs and lastly, (representing only 1%) the video rental stores.", stated Halpin.



### Issue Numbah' Three: The Competition

So, if consumers go into their local videogame store to buy the N64, and it's out of stock, how many of those consumers will walk out of the store with a Saturn or PlayStation? Hey, they've got the same retail price, and they already have large software libraries - in the PlayStation's case, larger than the N64's will be for years to come (for the simple fact that Sony has licensees who can afford to print CDs, but can't be players in the cartridge market).

Harrison responds: "We've heard rumors of a PlayStation shortage this Christmas - that they're keeping systems in Japan to compete with us there." A Sony spokesperson denies the rumors - and also denied the rumors that they were about to drop THEIR price point to \$149. Yet, the industry remains a-buzz' about both the PlayStation, and consequently, the Saturn reducing their S.R.P.'s. (The only topic that sparks more gossip than the private lives of P.R. women is the price points of videogame systems.)

But, c'mon, George, don't you think that \$50 million - \$20 million of that on TV ads - are going to have at least a tiny positive impact on the competition because of the shortage? "We're clearly investing heavily for a fast start. And we're making sure that the consumer clearly understands the difference between the Nintendo 64 and the rest, why the N64 is better." In other words, look for ads that don't just hype Nintendo, but point out the shortcomings of the other guys. (Sony has already taken this approach with their hilarious Crash Bandicoot ads, which show Sony's newly anointed mascot demo-ing the game outside Nintendo's headquarters.)

Everyone considers Sony to be Nintendo's competition, but what about the ailing Sega? Harrison plays it safe: "We have to consider Sega a threat. They have the Sonic franchise and haven't yet brought it to bear." Good point - the Big N has been burned by the Blue S before, so they (and the industry as a whole) shouldn't

consider Sega out of the game until the spiky speedster has made his 32-bit debut. But that debut won't be this Christmas, which is certainly a major blow; just days after showing a pathetically early version of Sonic at a press event in early August (which had two half-finished levels playing on two Saturns), Sega delayed the game until early '97.

And it doesn't look like NiGHTS, which is getting a \$10 million advertising push, is going to fill the gap, even with its Sonic ties (the same game designer worked on both). Harrison reports hearing through the retailer grapevine that NiGHTS "had a quick peak, then faded quickly." Of course, the TV ads for NiGHTS are just starting to appear, so the early figures are deceiving - but still discouraging. Most of the thirty-seven enthusiast magazines rating the title put it in the B to A range, not exactly what Sega was hoping for on the P.R.-side either.

### Issue Numbah' Four: The Software

Okay, Nintendo has the hardware. But what about the games, those things with which everyone makes the moolah? There's "Super Mario 64" - controversially declared by Next Generation magazine as, "the best videogame of all time" - and then there's, uh, what? "Pilotwings 64", a sequel to a SNES game with little more than a cult following?

Harrison conceded that some of the games displayed at E3 have since been heavily revamped, giving the jetski racing game "WaveRace 64" as an example: "After E3, we went back to rework it, to show consumers the system's power. And we're getting unbelievable



Everyone

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to be Nintendo's  
competition, but  
what about the  
ailing Sega?

...as long as  
Nintendo has  
Miyamoto in their  
corner, they're  
going to produce  
A+ titles - even by  
VGA standards.

reviews now - it's so realistic. We've even added dedicated marketing for the product." "Shadows of the Empire", the Star Wars game that disappointed many at E3, has also received some help: "We have programmers from Japan and people at LucasArts working on it, adding the final touches." Being a "launch title", we would be safe in assuming that it got more than a few touches and is probably vastly improved.

The problem with "Super Mario 64", as has been pointed out by many, is that it was the result of years of work by Shigeru Miyamoto - the best videogame designer on the planet, and if you disagree, I'll be forced to give you noogies 'til you cry - and unlimited resources. How can third-party companies even come close to the benchmark that Miyamoto has set?

And there's still the debate of cartridge vs. compact disc. Nintendo continues to preach the company line that carts are what the consumer truly wants, that Super Mario 64 couldn't have been done on the CD format, when it's suspected that Nintendo has stuck with cartridges to tightly control the game production process. Cartridges are a high-cost, high-risk format, and in the current market, not many third-party companies will be willing to take the gamble. Carts are also limiting to programmers and designers, as witnessed by SquareSoft's decision to release their next Final Fantasy role-playing game (RPGs are the biggest gaming genre in Japan) on the CD-based PlayStation, because they couldn't fit the game on a cart.

Which leads us to Nintendo's "bulky drive" add-on device, scheduled to debut at the Shoshinkai trade show in Japan this November, and to be released in the U.S. sometime in 1997 (wink wink, nudge nudge). Harrison admits that previous system add-ons have never been successful: "The Sega CD and the Sega 32X didn't really improve on the gaming experi-

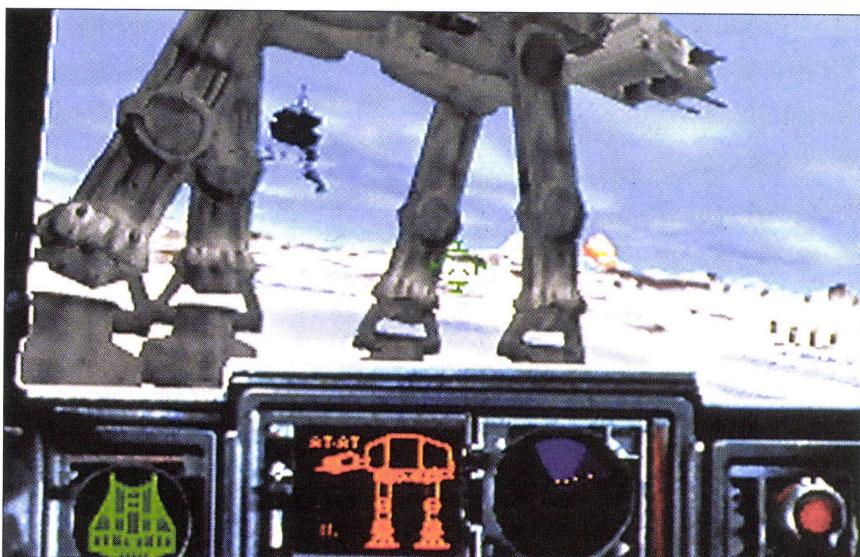
ence; they didn't have the right software." (I'd argue it was much more the latter, not the former, but I digress.) So why the bulky drive over the conventional CD? "It's a writable medium. That's important to us for on-line gaming. And the third-parties that publish [on the format] will have quicker turnaround. We're not blind to the needs of the publishers." But in the same breath, Harrison adds: "The CD format benefits the manufacturers more than the consumers." So Nintendo wants to help publishers, but not by using the CD format that would benefit them the most? Hmmm.

Still, even with all the negatives, you must admit that Nintendo produces great games with amazing consistency, and they probably don't NEED that many third-party publishers to succeed when they can keep puttin' on the hits all by their lonesomes. Super Mario 64 is a system-seller all by itself. Basically, as long as Nintendo has Miyamoto in their corner, they're going to produce A+ titles - even by VGA standards. Crash Bandicoot and NIGHTS, despite the dreams and wishes of Sony and Sega, don't hold a candle to Mario 64's gameplay. And retailers frankly don't care who's producing games, as long as they fly off the shelves.

## Issue Numbah'... Last: Nintendo is a Playah'

Harrison wrapped up our phone conversation with a statement that would be hotly debated by Sony and Sega, but has much truth: "The N64 is the most exciting thing in the videogame trade. The industry has been in the doldrums for the past two years, and we're excited to be taking it out." Even the jaded writers/reviewers of enthusiast magazines are raving about the system - Next Generation and Computer Player writers are notoriously harsh critics, for example. Another anecdote to show the excitement over the system: at the same Sega press event at which they demo-ed the not-even-close-to-done Sonic, they dramatically threw a broken PlayStation, then a broken N64, into the crowd of journalists to show that the videogame war is hell (giggle, snort). None of the journalists were bothered by the sight of the intentionally mangled PlayStation, but cries of pain went up as the trashed N64 was displayed.

**The Bottom Line:** Trying to predict the future of gaming is like trying to catch a greased pig with your pinky toes, but it's safe to say that the Nintendo 64 is the spark that's truly going to set the next-generation market on fire, and that the system is going to sell through at 100% until well into 1997. Retailers, get psyched: the 32/64-bit race is now well and truly on, and you're all winners. **VGA**





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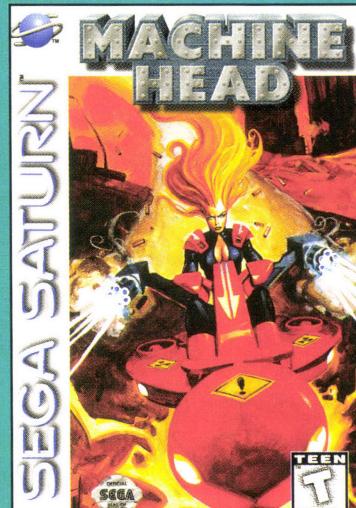
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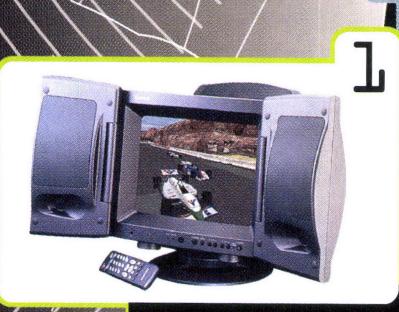
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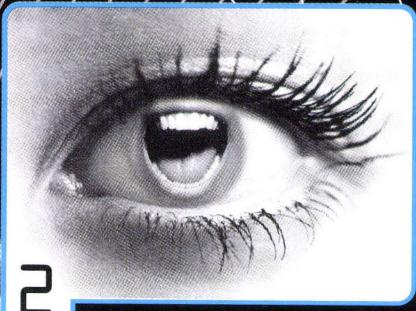
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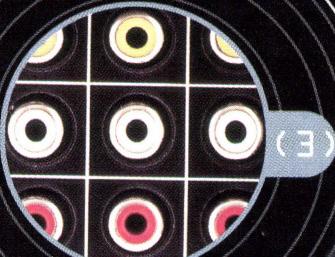


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**A** One of the best selling games for that particular platform. Great sound, graphics, playability, etc. This title will grow wings and fly off the shelves of any retail/rental store.

**B** A great game that is just lacking in some areas. It will sell well and bring in the masses, but just not to the extent of an "A" title. Retailers should make sure to buy this product deep enough to satisfy their individual store demands with some to spare.

**C** A good game that will sell about "average" in terms of sales. It is lacking in a few departments, therefore not worthy of a "B" rating. However, this is still a quality product.

**D** A game that is unsupported by the manufacturer, lacking in quality and generally should have stayed in development longer. This category may rent occasionally but will not sell well to anyone other than a "platform fan." Poor gameplay, bad plot and just better than an "F" rating.

**F** A product that never should have been considered, much less released. This is a thoroughly unimpressive title that will only become an inventory nightmare. Only at drastically discounted prices could this category sell.



**Title:** Creature Crunch  
**Platform:** Win 95 CD  
**Genre:** Quest  
**Size:** C  
**Publisher:** Class6 Interactive  
**Developer:** TechToons Ltd.  
**Available:** October  
**Wholesale:** \$31.00  
**MSRP:** \$39.95  
**VGA Rating:** B

While the release date for Virgin's elusive *Toonstruck* continues to be pushed back, the little-known development house of TechToons has released its own cartoon-based celebrity title, *Creature Crunch*, which features the vocal talents of comedians Martin Short and Eugene Levy.

As Wesley, an unlucky adolescent caught in the wrong place at the wrong time (and transformed into a half-monster by the evil Dr. Drod), the player navigates 22 separate rooms of Dr. Drod's sadistic mansion, solving puzzles and defeating enemies in hopes of escaping Drod's freakish domain.

The game features the most true-to-television cartoon animation seen on the market to date, designed with over 16,000 cels of artwork. While the game's interface and puzzles are nothing to really rave about, the smooth cartoon animations, the witty banter of Short and Levy, and an overall original and appealing storyline make *Creature Crunch* well worth its M.S.R.P.

**Bottom Line:** *Creature Crunch*, like most titles released by small development houses, will suffer from a notable lack of advertising, P.O.P. - or consumer magazine support for that matter. Still, the broad appeal of the title and low price-point should allow for decent sales in its genre.

— Gregory Angelo



**Title:** Madden NFL 97  
**Platform:** Genesis  
**Genre:** Sports  
**Size:** 16 MBIT  
**Publisher:** Electronic Arts  
**Developer:** High Score  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$49.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** A

What's surprising about *Madden NFL 97* on the Genesis isn't how good it is, but rather that the developers have managed to cram into the cartridge's puny 16MBIT ROM a few more features that neither the PlayStation or Saturn versions have! For instance, the Genesis cart allows you to be any player on offense you wish, including linemen. The game also includes player fatigue and the ability to save your "greatest play".

New penalties have been thrown into the mix, including holding, roughing the passer, and offensive pass interference. The player graphics are slightly enhanced and the animation is smoother, and now when you press the "fake snap" button the QB actually bobs his head in rhythm with the cadence. Other than the field still looking too small for the players, the graphics are about as good as you can expect from the platform.

Nearly all of the features found in the CD-ROM versions are here including 100+ NFL teams, over 400 Madden-designed plays, and different offensive sets within each formation.

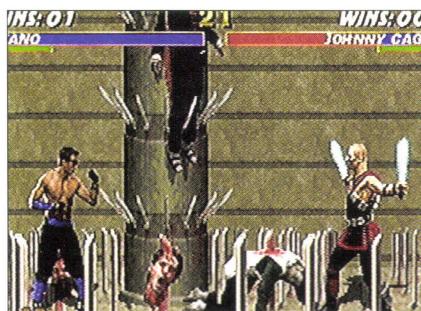
**Bottom Line:** This is without a doubt the best version of *Madden* for the Genesis yet; the only thing that will keep it from being the biggest selling version will be if the cartridge players finally upgrade to one of the 32-bit systems now that *Madden* is available on those platforms.

— Jeffrey Tschiltsch



As a courtesy to those readers who use our magazine as a guide in making purchasing decisions for their stores, we have made our review section as up-front and honest as possible. However, one should be aware that once products are reviewed and rated, we also extend a similar level of courtesy to the manufacturers. Titles which receive a rating in the D or F categories are faxed/e-mailed to the respective publisher, who is then given the opportunity to "pull" the reviews. As a good rule of thumb, one may consider avoiding products not reviewed in any current issues of Videogame Advisor.

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**Title:** MK Trilogy  
**Platform:** N64  
**Genre:** Fighting  
**Size:** N/A  
**Publisher:** Williams Ent.  
**Developer:** Midway  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$56.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** A-

Using the musical career of Elvis Presley as a frame of reference, the Mortal Kombat franchise is, metaphorically speaking, bursting the seams of its polyester jumpsuit and half-filling lounge rooms in Vegas. That is to say, it is finally running out of steam. But that didn't stop Elvis from singing and it certainly won't stop Williams from throwing everything it's got from the entire series into one package and praying for another hit.

MK Trilogy does indeed have it all. Every background screen, every Easter egg, every character and even a few new ones. The graphics, as one would expect from the N64, are nicely rendered and look surprisingly close to their arcade predecessors.

All of this will certainly be enough to draw in loyal fans of the series, but the glory days of massive pre-orders and irate senators are long gone. The only real novelty in the title is the player's ability to match characters from different games against each other.

**Bottom Line:** In the first few months of release, anything on the N64 can be guaranteed to sell-out. With all of the marketing hype from both NOA and Williams "MK Trilogy" is certainly no exception. Purchase enough to adequately supply whatever N64 software demand you may have.

– Matt Harding



**Title:** Star Control 3  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Action/Adventure  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Accolade  
**Developer:** Legend Entertainment  
**Available:** October  
**Wholesale:** \$38.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B

After several years floundering around the marketplace with too many employees and not enough quality product, Accolade has taken the past year to restructure and refocus their efforts on their flagship franchises: HardBall, Test Drive, and the subject of this here review, Star Control. Problem: The creative forces behind the first two games have long since moved on to Crystal Dynamics. (Can we say "bad career move"?). Solution: Accolade hired the folks at Legend Entertainment, the creators of the critically-acclaimed (and mediocre-selling) Gateway sci-fi adventure games.

The original Star Control was an action/strategy game, Star Control II an action/adventure; Star Control 3 is practically a blend of both, with equal parts shoot-'em-up, alien interaction, and strategic management of planetary colonies. The biggest change Legend has made is going to a point-and-click interface; the first two games were much more hands-on, while StarCon 3 only forces action upon you in the combat sequences.

**Bottom Line:** Star Control II is a legendary game, and the hard-core following of that title alone is going to stir up good sales; Accolade is also pushing the product with heavy advertising, and the reviews are guaranteed to be golden.

– Zach Meston



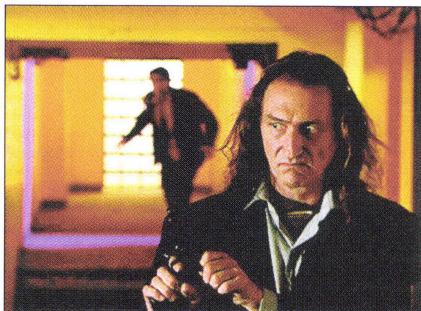
**Title:** Casper  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Action/Adventure  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Interplay  
**Developer:** Funcom  
**Available:** October  
**Wholesale:** \$49.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** C-

Alas, poor Casper - a game stuck in development hell for so long that the moderately successful movie upon which it's based came and went well over a year ago. After playing it at length, I'm still wondering what the developers needed all that time for - there isn't anything even close to revolutionary about the graphics (which are dark, underdetailed, and have a crunchy 16-bit taste) or the gameplay (which has players completing step-n-fetch-it tasks while flying around the halls of big ol' Whistaff Manor).

Yeah, about that gameplay - since when have ghosts needed keys to get through doors, as Casper needs throughout the adventure? Since when have ghosts been harmed by fire - or been harmed at ALL? The designers make use of Casper's wispy-yet-bulbous form in a few puzzles and game mechanics, but not enough, and not consistently. There's also the problem of demographics: Casper is aimed squarely at kids, but PlayStation owners are an older crowd, more likely to be interested in darker-toned comic book characters like Spawn or X-Men.

**Bottom Line:** The movie has dropped off the pop-culture radar, and the comic book is amusingly quaint for the '90s, so Casper has to sell on the strength of good reviews and positive word-of-mouth - and it's not going to get much of either. Stock this one minimally and wait for Sony's upcoming Spawn.

– Zach Meston



**Title:** Urban Runner  
**Platform:** Win 95 CD  
**Genre:** Interactive Movie/Quest  
**Size:** 4 CDs  
**Publisher:** Sierra On-Line  
**Developer:** Sierra On-Line  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**MSRP:** \$49.95  
**VGA Rating:** B-

Forget the summer movie industry - the PC "interactive movie" industry has seen an unproportionally large expansion this past summer, with the market flooded by FMV-packed games all claiming to be "totally interactive."

Urban Runner is probably the last entrant into this ridiculously large genre, but it is not a ridiculous entry. Sierra is marketing this title as a "100% Interactive Video-Thriller," rather incorrectly, and while it is chock-full of full-motion video, the game plays as more of a point-and-click PC quest than as an interactive video CD.

Urban Runner excels in its presentation in its ability to separate itself from similar titles in the genre by immersing the player only partly into the "movie" aspect of the game. Players will notice a control panel, an inventory, and an on-line hint system. Rather than exist as a "total FMV" product, Sierra has discovered a unique balance with Urban Runner that should please FMV fans but not discourage opponents of such releases.

**Bottom Line:** Sierra has supported the release of Urban Runner throughout the summer with a moderate print ad campaign. Because it is a title that appeals to both quest and FMV fans, and because it displays the name Sierra, expect Urban Runner's sales to be slightly better than comparable titles such as Fox Hunt or Johnny Mnemonic.

- Gregory Angelo



**Title:** King's Field 2  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** 3D Adventure/Quest  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Ascii Entertainment  
**Developer:** Ascii Entertainment  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$48.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B+

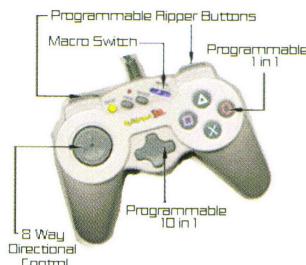
Ascii's first venture into software last year with King's Field was received well by gaming industry press and player's alike. Hoping to build upon their solid entry into the PlayStation software market, KFII is a sequel that improves upon the original enough to justify its existence, while making a valiant attempt at merging an RPG with a first person "Doom" style game.

King's Field II is above average as an action game - it features real time first person gameplay that is quick and challenging. There is plenty of territory to explore, adequate monsters to fight, and a good number problems to solve. As an RPG it isn't Final Fantasy, but the "Dungeons and Dragons" style setting should please die hard fans of the genre. The graphics, sound, and gameplay are all improved over the first release.

While not over-killing players, King's Field II provides a fun enthralling experience. Its immersive, its fast, and best of all, it's easy to get into. Combined with the current lull in the RPG market, KFII is a welcome breath of fresh air.

**Bottom Line:** This game should sell well over the holiday season due to the limited competition in the genre. Ascii is working hard to establish themselves in the software business and so far they are hitting two for two. King's Field II could become the sleeper hit of the season.

- Glenn Rubenstein



**Title:** PsychoPad JR..  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Peripheral  
**Size:** N/A  
**Publisher:**  
**Developer:** Act Laboratory Ltd.  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** \$19.95  
**MSRP:** \$25.96  
**VGA Rating:** A-

The latest addition to the console controller market is Act Laboratory's PsychoPad JR., a user programmable controller available for the Saturn, PlayStation and Super NES consoles. I put my evaluation unit for the PlayStation through the wringer, including extensive use with Tekken 2 and Madden NHL '97 (not to mention some minor abuse from a 5 year old who will remain nameless!), and am happy to say the PsychoPad JR.. is a well built and responsive controller.

Roughly the same shape as a standard PSX controller, the unit is slightly oversized for a comfortable grip and includes large action buttons in the same formation that PSX owners are now accustom to. What makes the PsychoPad particularly attractive, especially at its price point, are its programmability features. Up to four different sets of macros can be programmed into the unit's memory chip, including one to three second button "holds" and continuous motion direction pad movements, critical for today's fighting games.

**Bottom Line:** The PsychoPad JR.. worked as expected in its standard mode, and its different program modes will be especially desirable for your customers who play mostly fighting games. These features, combined with an M.S.R.P. much lower than comparable products, will make the PsychoPad a strong seller.

- Jeffrey Tschiltsch



**Title:** Black Dawn  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Flying/Shooting  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Virgin Interactive Ent.  
**Developer:** BlackOps Ent.  
**Available:** October 15  
**Wholesale:** \$48.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B-

Black Dawn is the absolute epitome of the loud, over-the-top, macho, hairy, anti-P.C. arcade game experience. Players pilot a mythical, pumped-up combat helicopter in third- or first-person perspective, against every possible foe in the known universe: Iraqi armor, unarmed Cessnas, South American drug lords (at one point the player is advised that he/she must eliminate a drug operation without the hassle of congressional approval) and - in one particular and gratuitous case of urban renewal - Los Angeles crack houses.

Black Dawn is one of the most kinetic games I have ever seen for the PlayStation, and every element of the gameplay is satisfying and pointlessly excessive, from the arsenal of available weapons to the gorgeous, expanding 3-D shockwaves of on-screen explosions, to the helpful strategic updates bellowed over the radio, to the absolutely needless barrage of; rockets, missiles, shells and other projectiles which continue to batter your downed chopper after the point at which you have crashed and burned.

**Bottom Line:** The people at Black Ops clearly remember what makes action games great, and Black Dawn has the potential for solid sales and - one can only hope - some really scary sequels.

- Chris Hudak/Adam Ellsworth



**Title:** Soviet Strike  
**Platform:** Saturn  
**Genre:** Action/Combat Sim  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Electronic Arts  
**Developer:** Tiburon Entertainment  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** \$48.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B+

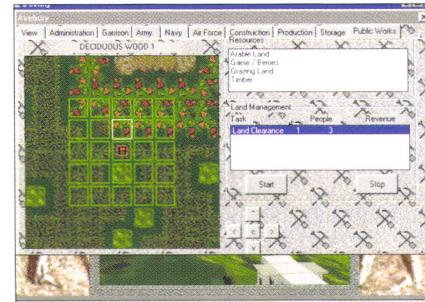
A perennial favorite on the 16-bit platforms, EA's "Strike" series finally makes the 32-bit leap with the latest installment in the series, Soviet Strike. Retaining the familiar playing perspective of the earlier versions, this action-based helicopter game includes several enhancements that will have fans of the series clamoring for more.

The game's graphics have been dramatically improved over its 16-bit cousins. Soviet Strike makes use of the CD-ROMs storage capabilities to include some FMV "transmissions" from players HQ informing players of prisoners they must rescue (with an implementation which is non-intrusive to the gameplay).

The game also includes some great sound effects, from the rattling chain gun to the violent missile explosions, and the new IMS music system picks up the tempo as the action heats up. "Juking" the helicopter is now easier thanks to the L/R triggers. One minor annoyance is how often the map has to be referenced; it would have been nice if you could "lock" your target on the heads-up compass.

**Bottom Line:** The success of the 16-bit series will no doubt be repeated on the Saturn thanks to Soviet Strike's upgraded graphics and gameplay. The usual EA print and retail promotions will make it a steady seller and its familiarity will all but ensure strong rental traffic.

- Jeffrey Tschiltsch



**Title:** Destiny  
**Platform:** Win 95 CD  
**Genre:** Strategy/Simulation  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Interactive Magic  
**Developer:** Dagger Interactive  
**Available:** October  
**Wholesale:** \$34.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B-

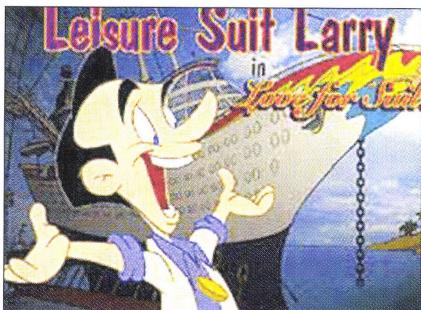
Interactive Magic is poised to release what it is being billed as, "the definitive, 3-D, real-time God game." After Sim City 2000's release two years ago, a major drought in the strategy simulation genre has been witnessed. With the release of best-selling titles such as Afterlife and Civilization II, the floodgates appear ready to reopen, and Interactive Magic's Destiny appears ready to capitalize upon the opportunity.

In Destiny, players are placed in control of the world in the time period of their choice - from the dawn of man to present day. Not only can the player colonize and develop their respective worlds, but they may also control natural resource management, technological advances, and, inevitably, warfare.

Destiny's special draw is the added ability of the player to literally walk about in the world they have created, a feature which has, up to now, remained unattempted in this genre.

**Bottom Line:** While not a gigantic publishing house, Interactive Magic has steadfastly retained quite a reputation - and garnered decent sales - for its strategy line. As the resurgence of such games begins anew, Destiny is one title to watch for. Expect average marketing and mediocre consumer awareness... purchase accordingly.

- Gregory Angelo



**Title:** Leisure Suit Larry 7  
**Platform:** PC  
**Genre:** Adult (Simulation)  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sierra On-Line  
**Developer:** Sierra On-Line  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$29.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B-

Some guys just never give up, and Larry Laffer - our title character, is one of those guys. In this newest installment in the series, our leisure-suited hero is once again 'cruising' for babes, in the most literal way possible - on the luxury cruise liner P.M.S. Bouncy, where the ultimate prize is Captain Thigh.

While still full of the elements which make the Leisure series so popular Larry 7 takes a number of questionable steps forward.

First, the gameplay actually affects one's computing environment. "Each time you finish one of the, uh, women," says Sierra Designer Al Lowe, "We're going to change your Windows wallpaper to reflect each conquest." [insert sound of entire religious-right parent's group in Topeka]. What else? Scratch-and-sniff puzzle elements, to be solved with the collection of scents enclosed (I'm not even going "there" in this preview).

**Bottom Line:** Surprisingly, it wasn't all that difficult to get my publisher to run this review - probably due to the series' continued saleability - but we couldn't, in all good conscience, rate it any higher than B-. There's very little marketing or word-of-mouth, but (and it's a BIG but) there is, most definitely an audience. If you've sold 'em before, you'll sell 'em again... and at about the same volume.

- Chris Hudak



**Title:** Road Rash  
**Platform:** Driving  
**Genre:** Win 95  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Electronic Arts  
**Developer:** Electronic Arts  
**Available:** October  
**Wholesale:** \$32.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B

Only one year ago I would have said that a game like Road Rash was not possible on a personal computer. I had seen other console-based action products attempt to make the leap from television screen to PC monitor with disastrous results - and lagging sales. To a great extent this is still the case, but as PCs become faster and able to process graphics at a faster rate, the door to action games on the PC seems to be opening wide.

Had it not been for the overwhelming market success of Electronic Arts' other big release, The Need for Speed, I would have said that PC racing games have an unbelievably small chance of success at the retail level. Quality programming and heavy marketing prove this theory otherwise.

Essentially a straight port of the original, Road Rash PC has some unique additions, such as modem play and high-res graphics modes. There are some hindrances, however, such as choppiness in high-detail modes, a MIDI soundtrack during races instead of the rock soundtrack the others featured, and a lack of difficulty.

**Bottom Line:** A fun title that is a great addition to any PC action fan's game library, Road Rash should do well with a wide-ranging demographic. Expect strong sales at the initial release time, but know that this title's heat will not last long. Not as good as the original 3DO version.

- Gregory Angelo



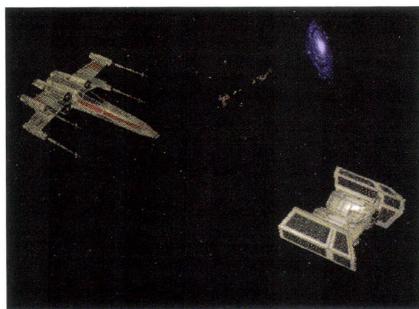
**Title:** NBA Live 97  
**Platform:** Genesis  
**Genre:** Sports  
**Size:** 16 Mbit w/8K battery  
**Publisher:** Electronic Arts  
**Developer:** NuFX  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$51.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** A-

It's hard to believe that each year EA is able to make their basketball game even better than the year before, but once again the pull off is seemingly impossible with NBA Live 97. While the look and feel of the game stays the same, there have been a few changes in the presentation and some new play options added.

The most noticeable change is with the menu and information screens, which now sport a style similar to the hip graphics used on ESPN2. When combined with smoother rendered player animations, this game is about as close to a televised NBA game as you're going to get on a cartridge. In addition to the standard 5-on-5 exhibition, season and playoff modes, the game now includes 2-on-2 and 3-on-3 half court modes along with a 3 point and Shoot Out contest.

**Bottom Line:** With great gameplay, improved graphics, new play modes and all the licensed extras you expect from EA Sports (all 29 teams, real NBA players and stats, etc.), NBA Live 97 is another excellent upgrade. It's hard to predict if cartridges will stay strong this holiday season, but given that NBA Live 96 sold very well and the fact there will be very little competition, this title should outperform most carts in both sales and rentals.

- Jeffrey Tschiltsch



**Title:** X-Wing vs. TIE fighter  
**Platform:** PC  
**Genre:** Flying/Shooting  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** LucasArts  
**Developer:** LucasArts  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$31.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** A+

This title takes all the elements of the previous Star Wars games, makes them better, and adds the long-awaited multiplayer element. Featuring an upgraded version of the graphic engine found in original X-Wing and TIE Fighter, X-W vs. TF features texture-mapped spaceship models gathered directly from the LucasFilms Star Wars archives.

Players may select from a dozen Imperial, Rebellion and pirate craft with which to complete 15 different missions set in locales such as asteroid belts, fields of space-junk, and the Endor star system. Each multiplayer mode scenario begins with a selection process wherein the players choose to fly for the Rebels or the Empire. Ships are selected, mission objectives are reviewed, and pilots may communicate with other squad-mates to discuss tactics. In addition, a real-time 3D map is available in-flight to provide rendezvous points and to facilitate mission strategies.

**Bottom Line:** This title is a highly anticipated product (by retailers and consumers alike), which will doubtless garner the kind of rabid attention of such popular multiplayer strategy games as Command & Conquer, Warcraft and Quake. As usual, expect the usual conservative but classy marketing campaign to keep this title on the top ten "best seller" lists for a while.

– Chris Hudak



**Title:** ABC's Mon. Night F-ball  
**Platform:** Windows 95  
**Genre:** Sports  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** OT Sports  
**Developer:** OT Sports  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$36.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** C-

"Are you ready for some football?!" OT Sports thinks you are and has brought ABC's Monday Night Football directly to your Windows 95 PC. The game makes heavy use of the platform's multimedia capabilities by displaying pre-game information in several "video monitor" windows, including pre-game analysis of each team by Frank, Al and Dan up in the booth.

Unfortunately, the MNF crew is about all this game has going for it. While it's loaded with options and includes sharp graphics, the game's interface takes some getting used to and the controller response is average at best. MNF's 3D graphics engine uses the latest version of the Win 95 DirectX drivers, but incompatibilities with my video card's display drivers resulted in poor animation performance. The game just doesn't provide

This title is also up against some heavy hitters this holiday season, both in terms of fighting for your shelf space, and your customers dollars. Comparing it with the likes of Sega and EA, I wouldn't bet heavily on it's saleability.

**Bottom Line:** Given the heavy hardware requirements, MNF's sluggish performance is bound to disappoint anyone with less than the ultimate PC. The game will still move thanks to the strong ABC license, but expect sales to taper off quickly and be prepared for a few returns.

– Jeffrey Tschiltsch



**Title:** PowerChess  
**Platform:** PC  
**Genre:** Chess Simulation  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sierra On-Line  
**Developer:** Sierra On-Line  
**Available:** October 15  
**Wholesale:** \$30.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B+

Promising to be "more powerful than any human opponent and more human than any computer opponent," Power Chess utilizes the WChess AI engine which emerged victorious in the "Fifth Harvard Cup Human Versus Computer Intel Chess Challenge" ... and which fought the famous "Deep Blue" to a draw.

The 'hostess' of Power Chess, the Chess Queen, is a clear-voiced presence which tutors and makes real-time commentary on both the player's matches and on reenactments of some of the 'great games' of all time, including the infamous Kasparov vs. Deep Blue Confrontation. Chess boards and pieces are mapped 3-D models, and a number of different and striking sets can be selected including abstract sets of various ethnicities and even an 'industrial' set composed of polished nuts, bolts, etc. And, of course, players seeking human opponents over the net need only jump to the Sierra web site and enter the Power Chess Tournament Hall.

**Bottom Line:** Chess sim games have a dedicated but small niche' market, not unlike PC-based pinball or card games. The difficulty however, is in determining if you have a buying audience in your stores, as many do not. If you have the capability of measuring how previous chess sim classics sold, you may want to use that as a purchasing guide.

– Chris Hudak



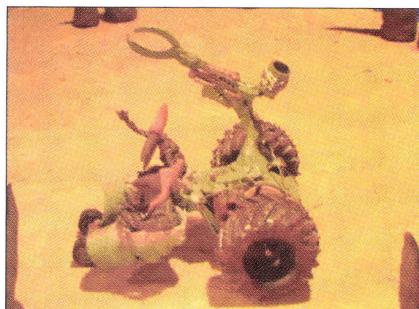
**Title:** Time Warp of Dr. Brain  
**Platform:** PC  
**Genre:** Edutainment  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Sierra On-Line  
**Developer:** Sierra On-Line  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$31.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** C+

While cute, animated and certainly educational, the Dr. Brain series also provides some great gameplay, real wit, and reasonably high-pressure situations. The Time Warp of Dr. Brain gives young and not-so-young gamers a number of modular game challenges involving everything from quick reflexes to verbal skills to musical composition, and the ones that aren't calm and contemplative can get quite hairy.

One example of the above statement can be found in Beaver Dam, where players must dam a river by maneuvering chunks of flotsam into position, while fending off all manner of dam-busting debris and irritating creatures who slink in from the riverbanks to undo the work in progress; this is very easy... until the river starts getting wider. Keeping the various vehicles in Gridlock en route to their homes while preventing their numerous potential collisions is a little like trying to convert Fahrenheit to Celsius in your head while Pyro the Clown is chasing you with a flame thrower.

**Bottom Line:** It's irrefutably true that some of the most popular titles out there are the super-violent (or abstractly violent) ones, but The Time Warp of Dr. Brain is concrete proof that non-violent, expansive games for younger audiences don't have to be insipid and insulting. Purchase this title conservatively, but keep those edutainment-buying customers in mind.

– Chris Hudak



**Title:** The Neverhood  
**Platform:** Puzzle/Quest  
**Genre:** Win 95  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Dream Works Int.  
**Developer:** Dream Works Int.  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$33.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** B-

The new development house of Dream Works Interactive and the producers of the wildly popular Earthworm Jim series of action games have teamed up to produce a unique and addictive game with an equally intriguing title: The Neverhood draws players into a surreal land of clay, placing them in control of a Gumby-meets Mr. Bill-type character, Klayman. Roving through the Neverhood's many locations, players solve numerous puzzles and piece together the mystery of a mysterious power affecting the land.

The strength of this game lies in its ability to be marketed as a glorified puzzle game, for, truth be told, the game's more interesting aspects lie in its perplexing puzzles, rather than its seemingly random storyline. As quest games go, The Neverhood is dwarfed by the competition; as puzzle games go, The Neverhood stands as one of the more original and well-developed titles available on the market today.

The "total clay" aspect of the game is not to be ignored, either. A title of this genre generated through the use of anything other than full-motion video is seen as an original product in the marketplace today, and this fact can be used to the title's advantage.

**Bottom Line:** An entertaining title that will appeal to an older, more puzzle-hungry audience, The Neverhood is a title which should fare fairly well. The main hindrance will be found in SKG's marketing of their first title

– Gregory Angelo



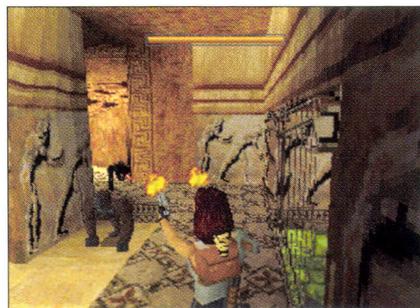
**Title:** Warcraft II: TOD  
**Platform:** Macintosh  
**Genre:** Strategy  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Blizzard Entertainment  
**Developer:** Blizzard Entertainment  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$36.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** A-

Along with Command & Conquer, Warcraft is a game whose name figures prominently in discussions of real-time strategy games. As the name implies, the sequel, Tides of Darkness, adds the seafaring element to the landlocked combat of the original Warcraft - war cruisers, troop/oil transports, platforms for gathering said oil, and even submarines.

Tides of Darkness does more than add to the assortment of units found in the original Warcraft - it improves upon the basic scheme. Gone, for instance, are the days of sending one suicide scout to clear up unexplored areas of darkened, unknown territory once and for all: A 'fog of war' permeates the battlefield, preventing units from seeing anything which is not within their direct line of sight; this reestablishes the importance of active patrols. Also, Warcraft 2 sports a map editor for creating your own battles and a sound editor for replacing the stock audio effects with your own, which can result in some terrifying or - if your customers are inclined that way - ridiculous-sounding engagements.

**Bottom Line:** Warcraft II will appeal to any fan of the original game, and there are quite a few of those... based upon our TRSTS reports. Macintosh users have responded well to the conversion of the original Warcraft and can expect an even more intense game experience from this improved sequel.

– Chris Hudak



**Title:** Tomb Raider  
**Platform:** Saturn  
**Genre:** Action/Adventure  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** EIDOS Interactive  
**Developer:** Core  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$49.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** A

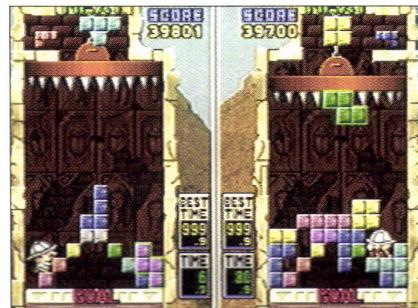
If Jon Woo were to direct an Indiana Jones movie with a female lead, it would most certainly look something like Core's Tomb Raider. On the surface the game may look like just another 3D shooter, but the expansive levels are full of puzzles that require more of the player than just simple blasting. There are numerous traps to avoid, puzzles to solve and enemies to blast as the player traverses the various locations ranging from jungle ruins to dungeons and Pyramids.

Here, gamers control adventurer Lara Croft, the dual-pistol wielding heroine in search of a mystic "scion", through a series of spectacularly detailed 3D environments. The game is presented in a pseudo first-person perspective from a floating camera above and behind Lara.

But, while this title features plenty of exploration and great gameplay, make no mistake that Lara herself is the major draw here. Lovingly rendered in a style reminiscent of today's hot "Image Comics characters",

**Bottom Line:** EIDOS has been heavily promoting Tomb Raider since it's debut at E3 and the buzz from several consumer publication previews has already made this one of the most anticipated games for the holiday season. Keep in mind while placing your specific SKU orders that dual system owning customers will likely opt for the PlayStation version over the Saturn.

- Jeffrey Tschitsch



**Title:** Tetris Plus  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Puzzle  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Jaleco  
**Developer:** Jaleco  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$49.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** C

Of all the goofily-named third-party companies that were around during the salad days of the 8-bit NES - American Sammy, Culture Brain, Electro Brain (and to this day, I find it fascinating that two videogame companies simultaneously had the word "brain" in their titles) - I certainly wouldn't have bet that Jaleco would keep going into the 32-bit era. (Can you off-hand name anything they did on 16-bit?) Yet their Bases Loaded franchise has always been popular and Tokyo Highway Battle was an enjoyable Ridge Racer clone.

Which brings us to Tetris Plus, an updated version of the extremely popular puzzle-piece product. You're still dropping blocky shapes into each other, but this time, a goofy little archaeologist is marching around on top of the pieces, while a ceiling of spikes slowly lowers at the poor old chap. (Explaining how an archaeologist ended up in Tetris would take more words than it's worth.) If you break enough blocks to drop him to the bottom of the screen, he moves on the next level. The Tetris concept has been taken in many other and more entertaining directions; this particular direction, alas, is more annoying than fun.

**Bottom Line:** Jaleco is likely going to push the heck out of this game - it does, after all, have a title name that's up there with Mickey Mouse for recognizability - but it's going to be out-marketed and out-sold by Capcom's superior Super Puzzle Fighter.

- Zach Meston



**Title:** Scorched Planet  
**Platform:** 3D Shooter  
**Genre:** Win 95  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Virgin Interactive  
**Developer:** RenderWare  
**Available:** November  
**Wholesale:** \$31.00  
**MSRP:** N/A  
**VGA Rating:** C+

Virgin can be rather lax when it comes to consistency; solid, multi-million-dollar blockbuster releases are often followed by mediocre titles which do not sell nearly as well as their fellow shelf-mates. Riding the success of Z and preparing for their long-delayed Toonstruck, games like Scorched Planet often do not receive the attention, marketing, and company support they need to be a successful release.

Scorched Planet puts players in the cockpit of a futuristic fighting machine, engaging enemy forces on the planetary surface of Dator 5 in order to save the inhabitants of the peaceful planet from death and certain conquer. Players fly through the game's levels in first-person style, picking up various weapons and power-ups, rescuing hostages, and destroying enemy structures. Sound familiar? That's because it is.

To the game's credit though, the title does contain some neat features like a high-resolution mode, unique missions that go beyond mere shoot-'em-up, and a morphing feature on the fighter. All of these aspects have been seen in other titles of this genre however.

**Bottom Line:** Yet another in the long line of 3D shooter line-up, Scorched Planet does little to make a name for itself. A decent title, it will find sales in the die-hard genre fan, but do not expect even Virgin's marketing power to make this title a bestseller.

- Gregory Angelo



**Title:** PsychoPad K.O.  
**Platform:** PSX, Saturn, SNES  
**Genre:** Peripheral  
**Size:** N/A  
**Publisher:** Act Laboratory Ltd.  
**Developer:** Act Laboratory Ltd.  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** \$47.00  
**MSRP:** \$59.96  
**VGA Rating:** B+

The "big brother" of the PsychoPad J.R., the PsychoPad K.O. is a full size arcade-style joystick. Like the Junior, it includes programmability features that allow players to store multiple button and direction movements and execute them with a single button press. In addition, the larger K.O. model includes Auto Fire on/off switches for each button along with slow motion and a special "flip" switch that lets gamers reverse a programmed sequence that depends on which way their character is facing.

The unit is well constructed and has a very solid feel to it. The joystick and action buttons use micro-switch technology that ensures responsive control. The controller will be especially attractive for those customers with multiple game systems, as the unit can be used with the PSX, Saturn or SNES consoles by simply plugging in the appropriate cable for that system. The "universal" button layout may be a problem for some players, especially PSX owners used to their standard controller's "diamond" layout for the action buttons.

**Bottom Line:** A well built product, the PsychoPad K.O.'s attempt to be all things to all players will appeal to multi-console owners if they can get used to the button layouts. A great product for the retailer, since a single SKU services three separate platforms.

- Jeffrey Tschiltsch



**Title:** Shadoan  
**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Interactive Movie/RPG  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Interplay  
**Developer:** Virtual Image Prod.  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**MSRP:** \$39.95  
**VGA Rating:** C

One of the most heavily anticipated and talked about titles of 1995 and subsequently one of the year's biggest software blunders was *Kingdom: The Far Reaches*. Featuring an epic storyline, smooth cartoon animation, and deeper gameplay than most interactive movies involve themselves with, many felt that *Kingdom* simply could not fail. Yet lagging sales - even on ports to console systems - failed to breathe any life into the title. Even worse: the storyline of *Kingdom* dictated a necessary sequel - Interplay was definitely in this one for the long haul.

In the sequel to *Kingdom: The Far Reaches*, *Shadoan*, players continue in their quest to assemble the five pieces of a mystical amulet that will save the kingdom from the domination of the evil wizard Turlok and restore peace to the land. Interplay has done the best they could to improve the look of the series in *Shadoan*.

While these improvements do enhance the look of the game, the original's lack of sales was due not to its cold presentation but to its unappealing storyline. Interplay has learned a valuable lesson with its *Kingdom* series: sequels should only be created after a very successful release.

**Bottom Line:** A solid marketing campaign could salvage this title, but because the game is almost totally built around the first installment of the *Kingdom* series expect only minimal sales.

- Gregory Angelo



**Title:** Time Commando  
**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Action/Quest  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Activision  
**Developer:** Adeline Software  
**Available:** Now  
**Wholesale:** N/A  
**MSRP:** \$39.95  
**VGA Rating:** B

One of the more anticipated titles of 1996, *Time Commando*, programmed by one of the most admired developers in the business, Frederick Raynal (of *Alone in the Dark* fame), is finally nearing completion and looks to be an impressive entrant into the PlayStation's library of games.

In a futuristic world where global powers race to develop advanced technology to attain military domination, a time travel simulator is sabotaged, poisoned with a virus that threatens to distort universal time for all eternity.

As a top-ranking soldier out to destroy the evil computer virus, the player must travel through nine different time periods ranging from the prehistoric age to the distant future, along the way battling with the virus's holographic enemy projections and collecting over 45 different weapons characteristic of their respective time periods.

Featuring 3-D rendered characters, fluid animations, and a wide variety of gameplay ranging from object-hunting to straight real-time combat, as well as a refreshingly original storyline, *Time Commando* should do well in the marketplace.

**Bottom Line:** Much like *Alone in the Dark*, Raynal's previous best-selling series, much of *Time Commando*'s success will be due to strong word of mouth and Activision's heavy marketing. Do not expect heavy sales during the game's initial release, but soon thereafter.

- Gregory Angelo

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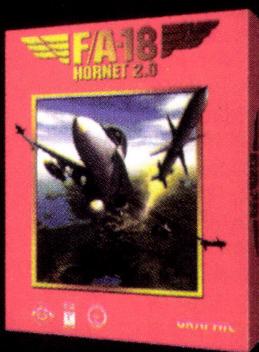
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# RELEASE SCHEDULE

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VIDEOGAME ADVISOR

Product Title	Manufacturer/ Publisher	Genre	VGA Rating	EST Ship Date	SRP
<b>GENESIS</b>					
Adventures of Dizzy	Gametek	Side-scroller			
BASS Masters Classic: Pro Edition	THQ	Fishing			
Cosmic Spacehead	Gametek	Action	C-		
Flintstones	Ocean	Side-scroller			
Man Overboard	Gametek	Action			
Micro Machine 1	Gametek	Racing			
Micro Machine 2	Gametek	Racing			
NBA Hangtime	Midway Home Ent.	Basketball			
Psycho Pinball	Gametek	Pinball			
Sonic 3D Blast	Sega	Side-scroller			
Ultimate MK3	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting			
Vectorman 2	Sega	Side-scroller			
Virtua Fighter	Sega	2-D Fighting			
X-Woman The Sinister Virus	Sega	Fighting			
<b>Mac</b>					
Caesar II	Sierra	Gambling			
Dragon's Lair II	ReadySoft	Adventure			
Drowned God	WEA	N/A	P		
Maximum Surge	Acclaim	Interactive Movie			
Mission Ooze Control	WEA	N/A			
Police Quest SWAT	Sierra	Action			
Primal Rage	WEA	Fighting			
Prize Fighter	Acclaim	Fighting			
Rise of the Robots II	Acclaim	Fighting			
Where's Waldo	WEA	Edutainment			
<b>N64</b>					
Blast Corps	Nintendo	Action/Adventure			
Blast Dozer	Nintendo	Action/Adventure			
Body Harvest	Nintendo	Strategy			
Buggie-Boogie	Nintendo	3D Shooter			
Creator	Nintendo	Strategy/"God" game			
Crusin' USA	Nintendo	Racing			
Doom	Midway Home Ent.	3D Shooter			
Freak Boy	Virgin	3D Shooter			
Golden Eye 007	Nintendo	Adventure			
Gretzky II	Midway Home Ent.	3D Hockey			
Ken Griffey Jr. Baseball	Nintendo	Baseball			
Killer Instinct Gold	Nintendo	Fighting			
Legend of Zelda 64	Nintendo	Role-playing game			
Mission Impossible	Ocean	3D Adventure	P		
MK Trilogy	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting			
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting			
NBA Hangtime	Midway Home Ent.	Basketball			
Robotech: Crystal Dreams	Gametek	Flying/Adventure			
Star Fox 64	Nintendo	Flying/Strategy			
Star Wars: Shadows	Nintendo	Action/Adventure			
Super Mario Kart 64	Nintendo	Racing			
Tetrisphere	Nintendo	Puzzle			
Top Gear Rally	Kemco	Driving			
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter	Acclaim	3D Adventure	P		
Ultimate MK3	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting			
War Gods	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting			
Waveracer	Nintendo	Racing			
Wayne Gretzky	Midway Home Ent.	Hockey			
<b>PC</b>					
Abduction	Gametek	Adventure	B-		
Albion	Blue Byte	Role Playing			

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Product Title	Manufacturer/ Publisher	Genre	VGA Rating	EST Ship Date	SRP
Alien Trilogy	Acclaim	3D Shooter		TBD	
Apocalypse	Sierra	Adventure		Early 1997	
Ark Of Time	KOEI			November 18	
BanZai Bug	GROLIER	Flying	C+	October	
Betrayal In Antara	Sierra	Action		Fall 1996	
Captives	Sierra	Adventure		Early 1997	
Chill Manor	Simon & Schuster	Quest		October	
Cloak	Sierra	Adventure		Fall 1996	
Corpse Killer	Acclaim	Shooter		TBD	
Cyber Gladiators	Sierra	Fighting		Fall 1996	
Daytona USA	Sega	Racing		October 31	
Deadly Skies	JVC	Flying/Shooter		January 1997	
Deadly Tide	Microsoft	Action		October 3	
Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	Racing		November	
Diablo	Blizzard	RPG		October	
Drowned God	Inscape	Puzzle/FMV	P	November	
Emperor Of The Fading Sun	Sega	Strategy		November	
Flight Simulator for Windows 95	Microsoft	Simulations		November 7	
Fragile Alliance	Interplay	Strategy	P	December	
GEX	Microsoft	Arcade		November	
Golf 3.0	Microsoft	Golf		November	
Hellbender	Microsoft	Action		October	
Hoyle Bridge	Sierra	Adventure		Early 1997	
Hoyle Casino Delux 2	Sierra	Gambling		Fall 1996	
Hunter Hunted	Sierra	Adventure		Fall 1996	
Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2	LucasArts	Shooter		TBD	
Leisure Suit Larry: Love For Sail	Sierra	Adult Quest		Winter 1996	
Lighthouse	Sierra	Action		Fall 1996	
Lords Of The Realm II	Sierra	Adventure		Winter 1996	
Magellan	V-Tech	Edutainment		October	
Mass Destruction	BMG	3D Shooter		April 1997	
Mechwarrior 2: Mercenaries	Activision	Strategy/Shooter	A-	October	
Medalworks	Sega	N/A		November	
Metropolis	Sierra	Adventure		Early 1997	
MDK	Playmates	3D Shooter	P	December	
Mission Ozone Control	WEA	N/A		October	
MotoX	WEA	Racing		TBD	
Nascar Racing II	Sierra	Racing		Fall 1996	
Noir	Cyberdreams	Adventure	P	October	
Outlaws	LucasArts	3D Action		TBD	
Outpost 2.0	Sierra	Action		Early 1997	
Phantasmagoria 2	Sierra	FMV		Fall 1996	
Pie Jackers	Simon & Schuster	N/A		November	
Pinball Construction Kit	21st Century	Pinball	B-	October	
Power Chess	Sierra	Chess Sim.		Winter 1996	
Primortals	Sierra	Action		Winter 1996	
Prize Fighter	Acclaim	Fighting		TBD	
Pro Pinball	Acclaim	Pinball		TBD	
PTO II	KOEI	Shooting		October	
Quake	GT Interactive	3D Shooter		TBD	
Rama	Sierra	Action		Fall 1996	
Raw Pursuit	JVC	N/A		October	
Realms Of The Haunting	Interplay	3D	P	December	
Red Baron 2	Sierra	Flying/Combat	P	October	
Richard Scarry's The Best Rding Pro.	Simon & Schuster	Edutainment		October	
Sega Rally	Sega	Racing		December 10	
Sign Of The Sun	KOEI	RPG		February 1997	
Simon the Sorcerer 2	Psygnosis	N/A		TBD	
Snow Crash	Viacom	3D Quest	P	November	
Soccer	Microsoft	Soccer		November	
Sonic CD	Sega	Side-scroller		October 15	

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Product Title	Manufacturer/ Publisher	Genre	VGA Rating	EST Ship Date	SRP
Sonic Schoolhouse	Sega	Edutainment		October 15	
Spaceship: Pythagoras	Simon & Schuster	N/A		October	
SSN	Simon & Schuster	N/A		November	
Star Control 3	Accolade	Role Playing	P	November	
Star Trek: Borg	Simon & Schuster	Interactive Movie		November	
Strange Place	Simon & Schuster	N/A		November	
The City Of Lost Children	Psygnosis	3D Adventure	P	November	
The Pill Book	Simon & Schuster	N/A		October	
The Time Warp Of Dr. Brain	Sierra	Adventure		Winter 1996	
Trophy Bass II	Sierra	Fishing		Fall 1996	
Virtua City PD	Sega	3D Shooter		October 31	
VirtuaPark: The Fish	KOEI	Adventure		September 23	
Whats My Story	Acclaim	N/A		TBD	
X-Men: Children of the Atom	Acclaim	Fighting		TBD	
X-Wing vs Tie Fighter	Lucas Arts	Flying/Combat	P	November	
<b>PLAYSTATION</b>					
Aeon Flux	Viacom	3D Shooter	P	November	
AD&D Iron & Blood	Acclaim	RPG		October 3	
Adventures Of Lomax	Psygnosis	Side-Scroller/Adventure		October	
Aerial Striker	Atlas	3D Polygon Sci-Fi Shooting		October	
Arcade's Greatest Vol. 2	Midway Home Ent.	Compilation		December 16	
Area 51	Midway Home Ent.	Shooter		October 15	
Ark Of Time	KOEI	RPG		November 18	
Armed	Interplay	Strategy/"God" Game		TBD	
Athanor	Psygnosis	N/A		November 15	
Ball Blazer Champions	LucasArts	Action		November	
Batman Forever Arcade	Acclaim	Fighting		November 15	
BattleSport	Acclaim	Shooting/Fighting		TBD	
Black Dawn	Virgin	Helicopter Combat Arcade		October 15	
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	Fighting	P	TBD	
Broken Helix	Konami	Action/Adventure		December	
Bubsy 3D	WEA	3D Adventure		November 19	
Buster Brothers Collection	Capcom	Puzzle		November 20	
Burning Road	Playmates	Action		November 4	
Carnage Heart	Sony	Action		TBD	
Castlevania: The Bloodletting	Konami	Action/Adventure		Spring 1997	
Chaos Control	THQ	Shooter		TBD	
Chronicles Of The Sword	Psygnosis	Adventure		November	
City Of Lost Children	Psygnosis	3D Adventure/Quest		October 15	
Clandestiny	Virgin	Mystery Adventure		TBD	
Command & Conquer	Virgin	Action Arcade Shooter		January 1997	
Contra: Legacy Of War	Konami	Action		November	
Crow: City of Angels	Acclaim	3D Adventure		December 5	
Crypt Killer	Konami	Gun		Winter 1997	
Cybersled	Namco	3D Shooter		November	
Dark Forces	LucasArts	Doom Clone		November	
Deadly Skies	JVC	Flying/Combat		January 1997	
Death Crusader	Gametek	N/A		TBD	
Death Drome	Virgin	Action		January 1997	
Death Trap Dungeon	EIDOS	Adventure		December 15	
Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	Racing	P	November 15	
Disruptor	Interplay	3D Shooter		October 15	
Discworld II: Morality Bytes	Psygnosis	Adventure		December	
Doom	Midway Home Ent.	3D Adventure		November	
DragonHeart	Acclaim	Fighting/Adventure		October 30	
Dream Knight	Jaleco	N/A		November	
Dream Team B-Ball	EIDOS	Baseball		October 15	
Duckman: The Legend Of The Fall	Playmates	Quest		January 1997	
Enforcer	Konami	Shooting		TBD	
Epidemic	Sony	N/A		October 1	

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Product Title	Manufacturer/ Publisher	Genre	VGA Rating	EST Ship Date	SRP
Fade To Black	EA	3D Adventure	P	October	
Fatal Fury	Sony	Fighting		December 5	
Final Doom	Midway Home Ent.	3D Shooter	A-	October 22	
Floating Runner	THQ	Platform/Action/Adventure		October 15	
Formula 1	Sony	Racing	P	December 5	
Formula 1: Post Season	Sony	Racing		February 15, 1997	
Fox Hunt	Capcom	Interactive Movie		October 15	
Golden Nugget	Virgin	Gambling		January 1997	
Golf - The Final Round	Konami	Golf		August	
Grand Slam '97	Virgin	Baseball		April 1997	
Grid Runner	Virgin	Action Arcade		October 15	
Heart of Darkness	Virgin	Action Adventure		October	
Herc's Adventures	LucasArts	Action Adventure		November	
High Velocity	Atlus	Racing	C+	September	
Impact Racing	Acclaim	Racing	C	March 1997	
Incredible Hulk	EIDOS	3D Adventure		November 25	
Ironman	Acclaim	Fighting		October 15	
Island of Dr. Moreau	Sony	Interactive Movie		January 15, 1997	
Jet Moto	Sony	Racing		November 15	
Jupiter Strike	Acclaim	Shooter		December	
Killing Time	Acclaim	Adventure		TBD	
King's Field 2	ASCII Entertainment	Role Playing	P	November	
Kumite: The Fighters Edge	Konami	Adventure		December	
Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny	Virgin	Adventure/Role-play		January 1997	
Legends Football 97	WEA	Football		November 29	
Lemmings	Sony	Puzzle		November	
Lethal Enforcers 1 & 2	Konami	Gun		December	
Lost Vikings II	Interplay	Adventure		November 23	
Lomax in Lemmingland	Sony	Side-scroller		October 15	
Machinehead	EIDOS	N/A		October 20	
Madden '97	EA	Football	A	November	
Magic: The Gathering	Acclaim	Puzzle		December 1	
Magzone	Trimark	N/A		TBD	
Major Damage	Capcom	Action Adventure		TBD	
Marvel Super Heroes	Capcom	Fighting		TBD	
Mega Man 8	Capcom	Side-scroller		TBD 1997	
Megami Tensei	Atlus	Action/RPG		December	
MK Trilogy	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting		October 11	
Monster Truck Rally	Sony	Racing		October 15	
Mortal Kombat II	Acclaim	Fighting		TBD	
Motor Toon Grand Prix	Sony	Racing		October 3	
Museum Vol. 2	Namco	Compilation		October 15	
Myst	Psynopsis	Adventure		October	
Nanotek Warrior	Virgin	Action Arcade/Shooter		January 1997	
NBA Hangtime	Midway Home Ent.	Basketball		November 4	
NBA In The Zone 2	Konami	Basketball		November	
NBA Jam Extreme	Acclaim	Basketball		November 1	
NFL Full Contat Football	Konami	Football		TBD	
NFL GameDay 97	Sony	Football		November 15	
NHL Face Off 97	Sony	Hockey		November 10	
NHL Open Ice	Midway Home Ent.	Hockey		November 18	
Oblivion	EIDOS	N/A		December 15	
Obsidian	Rocket Science	N/A		TBD	
Open Ice Hockey	Midway Home Ent.	Hockey		November 15	
Pitball	WEA	N/A		October 29	
Prime Cuts Sampler	Interplay	Multi-game Sampler		TBD	
Pro Pinball	Acclaim	Pinball		TBD	
Pro Pinball	Interplay	Pinball		October 24	
Quarantine	Gametek	3D Shooter		TBD	
Rally Cross	Sony	Racing		December 5	
Raw Pursuit	JVC	N/A		February 1997	

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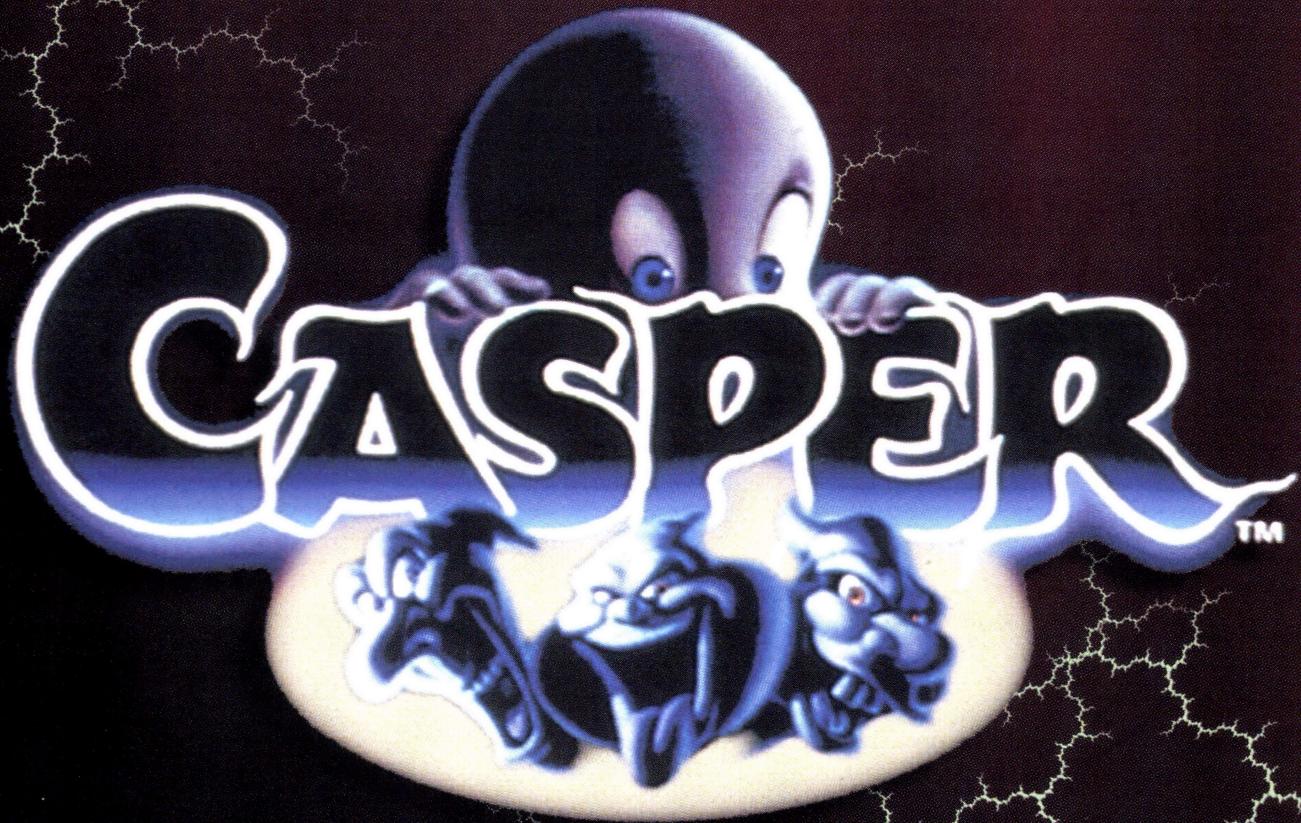
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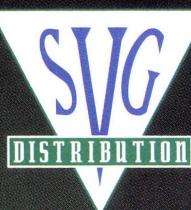
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Product Title	Manufacturer/ Publisher	Genre	VGA Rating	EST Ship Date	SRP
Real Bout Fatal Fury	Sony	Fighting		December 15	
Rebel Assault II	LucasArts	Action/Adventure		November	
Red Asphalt	Interplay	Racing		February 15, 1997	
Reloaded	Interplay	Shooter		December 15	
Road Rage	Konami	Driving		January 1997	
Robotron	Midway Home Ent.	3d Shooter		November 5	
Rodney Matthews	Sony	N/A		January 15, 1997	
Samurai Shodown III	Sony	Fighting		October 8	
Sentient	Sony	N/A		October 15	
Shadoan	ReadySoft	N/A		November 1	
Sign Of The Sun	KOEI	RPG		February 1997	
Slam Scape	Virgin	Action		October 1	
Soul Edge	Namco	Fighting		October 15	
Soviet Strike	EA	Playing/Shooting	P	October	
Space Jam	Acclaim	N/A		October 25	
Spawn	Sony	Fighting/Side-scroller		November 15	
Spider	BMG	Action/Adventure		February 1997	
Spot Goes To Hollywood	Virgin	Arcade Style		October 8	
Star Gladiator	Capcom	Fighting	B	October 31	
Street Fighter Alpha 2	Capcom	Fighting	A-	October 31	
Suikoden	Konami	RPG		Winter 1997	
Super Kick Boxer	THQ	Fighting		October 15	
Super Puzzle Fighter	Capcom	Puzzle		January 15, 1997	
Swagman	EIDOS	N/A		February 15, 1997	
Syndicate Wars	Electronic Arts	Strategy/Shooter		TBD	
Tempest 2000	Interplay	Shooter		October	
Tempest X	Interplay	Shooter		November 19	
Tenka	Sony	3D Shooter		March 15, 1997	
The Divide: Enemies Within	Viacom	Action/Adventure		November 5	
The Fallen	Sony	N/A		January 15, 1997	
The Hive	Trimark	Adventure		TBD	
The 11th Hour	Virgin	Interactive Drama		TBD	
The Space Bar	Rocket Science	N/A		TBD	
Tobal No. 1	Sony	N/A		November 15	
Tomb Raider	EIDOS	3D Shooter		November 5	
Tunnel B-1	Sony	Action		October 15	
Twisted Metal 2	Sony	3D Shooter		October 10	
Virtual Pool	Interplay	Pool		TBD	
VMX Racing	Playmates	Racing		December 3	
VR Baseball	Interplay	Baseball		TBD	
VR Golf	Interplay	Golf		October 15	
VR Pool	Interplay	Pool		February 15, 1997	
VR Pro Pinball	Interplay	Pinball		October 15	
War Gods	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting		February 1997	
WC Racing: Track Attack PS	Spectrum Holobyte	Racing		TBD	
WC Racing: Vette	Spectrum Holobyte	Racing		TBD	
Werewolf: The Apocalypse	Capcom	RPG		March 15, 1997	
WipeOut XL	Sony	Racing		November 15	
Wing Commander 3	Electronic Arts	Interactive Movie/Flying	B-	March 1997	
WWF Arcade	Acclaim	Wrestling		November 15	
WWF: In Your House	Acclaim	Wrestling		November 21	
X-Men: Children/Atom	Acclaim	Fighting		December 15	
2Xtreme	Sony	Sports		October 3	
3-Decathlon	Virgin	Sports/Arcade		November	
<b>SATURN</b>					
AD&D Iron & Blood	Acclaim	RPG		October 17	
Amok	Sega	Adventure		December 3	
Arcades Greatest Hits	Midway Home Ent.	Compilation		December 10	
Area 51	Midway Home Ent.	Shooter		October 15	
Armed	Interplay	Adventure		TBD	

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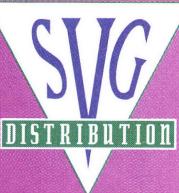
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Product Title	Manufacturer/ Publisher	Genre	VGA Rating	EST Ship Date	SRP
Assault Rigs	Sega	Combat/Driving		January 28, 1997	
Batman Forever Arcade	Acclaim	Fighting		November 15	
BattleSport	Acclaim	Shooting		TBD	
BioHazard Five	Acclaim	N/A		TBD	
Black Dawn	Virgin	Helicopter Combat/Arcade		November 12	
Blazing Heroes	Sega	N/A		October 8	
Brutal 2210	Gametek	Action		TBD	
Bubsy 3D	WEA	3D Adventure		December 16	
Bug Too!	Sega	3D Adventure		November 21	
Buster Brothers	Capcom	Puzzle		TBD 1997	
Command & Conquer	Virgin	Combat Strategy		December 3	
Contra: Legacy Of War	Konami	Action/Adventure		December	
Crime Wave	EIDOS	Action		November 10	
Crow: City Of Angels	Acclaim	3D Adventure		December 5	
Crypt Killer	Konami	Gun		Winter 1997	
Cyberbots	Capcom	Fighting		January 15, 1997	
Cybersled	Namco	3D Shooter		TBD	
Dark Savior	Sega	N/A		November 26	
Daytona Champ Edition	Sega	Racing		November 26	
Deadly Skies	JVC	Flying/Shooter		March 1997	
Decathlete	Sega	Various Sports		July	
Descent	Interplay	3D Shooter	B+	TBD	
Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	Driving/Racing		TBD	
Discworld	Psygnosis	Quest		TBD	
DragonHeart	Acclaim	Fighting		October 18	
Dragon's Lair II	ReadySoft	Adventure		October 18	
Dream Knight	Jaleco	N/A		November	
Dream Team B-Ball	EIDOS	Sports/Basketball		October 15	
Fighting Vipers	Sega	Fighting	P	October 17	
Frankenstein	Interplay	Adventure		October 15	
Ganymed	Rocket Science	Action		TBD	
Grand Slam '97	Virgin	Baseball		April 1, 1997	
Grid Runner	Virgin	Action arcade		October 15	
GT Basketball	Gametek	Basketball		November 15	
Heart Of Darkness	Sega	Side-scroller	P	November	
Herc's Adventures	Sega	N/A		November	
Hyper 3D Pinball	Virgin	Arcade		November 11	
Impact Racing	Acclaim	Racing/Shooter	C	March 1997	
Incredible Hulk 2	EIDOS	3D Adventure		November 25	
Iron Rain	Sega	N/A		Delayed	
Killing Time	Acclaim	Action		TBD 1997	
Krazy Ivan	Sega	Shooter/Action		October 29	
Kumite: The Fighter Edge	Konami	Fighting		January 1997	
Legends Football '97	WEA	Football		November 29	
Lemmings 3D	Psygnosis	Puzzle		TBD	
Lost Vikings II	Interplay	Adventure		December 1	
Machine Head	EIDOS	N/A		October 20	
Magic: The Gathering	Acclaim	Strategy		December 1	
Major Damage	Capcom	Side-scroller	P	TBD	
Marvel Super Heroes	Capcom	Fighting		November 20	
Mass Destruction	BMG	3D Shooter		April 1997	
Mega Man 8	Capcom	Side-scroller		TBD 1997	
MK Trilogy	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting		December 3	
Micropose Football	Sega	Football		TBD	
Mortal Kombat 1&2	Acclaim	Fighting		October 15	
Mr. Bones	Sega	Action		October 15	
NBA Jam Extreme	Acclaim	Basketball		November 1	
NFL '97	Sega	Football		November 19	
NFL Full Contact Football	Konami	Football		TBD	
Obsidian	Rocket Science	Adventure		TBD	
Olympic Summer Games	EIDOS	Sports		October 15	

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Powerslave	Playmates	3D Shooter		November 15	
Prize Fighter	Acclaim	Fighting		TBD	
Project Overkill	Konami	Action/Adventure		January 1997	
Pro Pinball	Acclaim	Pinball		TBD	
Pro Pinball	Interplay	Pinball		October 24	
PTO	KOEI	Shooting/Action		December	
Quake	Sega	3D Adventure/Shooter		January 28, 1997	
Raw Pursuit	JVC	N/A		February 1997	
Return Fire	Midway Home Ent.	Strategy/Combat		October 23	
Rocket Jockey	Rocket Science	Action			
Sacred Pools	Sega	Interactive Movie		November	
Saturn Sonic 3D Blast	Sega	3D Adventure		November 21	
Scorcher	Sega	Action		December 17	
Shadoan	ReadySoft	Adventure		November 1	
Shining Wisdom	Working Designs	RPG		TBD	
Sonic X-Treme	Sega	3D Adventure		November 7	
Space Jam	Acclaim	N/A		October 25	
Spike	Sega	N/A		January 1997	
Spot Goes To Hollywood	Virgin	Side-scroller		October 29	
St. Fighter Alpha 2	Capcom	Fighting		October 31	
Super Motocross	Acclaim	Racing		TBD	
Super Puzzle Fighter	Capcom	Puzzle		January 15, 1997	
Supreme Warrior	Acclaim	Fighting		TBD	
Swagman	EIDOS	N/A		February 15, 1997	
Tempest 2000	Interplay	Shooter		November 19	
Tempest X	Interplay	Shooter		November 15	
The Space Bar	Rocket Science	Action/Mystery	P	TBD	
Three Dirty Dwarves	Sega	N/A		October	
Tomb Raider	EIDOS	3D Adventure		November 5	
Toshinden URA	Sega	Fighting		November 12	
Varuna's Forces	JVC	N/A		February 1997	
Virtua Cop 2	Sega	Shooting		January 7, 1997	
Virtua Cop 2 w/ Stunner	Sega	Shooting		January 7, 1997	
Virtual On	Sega	3D Shooter		November 14	
VR Baseball	Interplay	Baseball		TBD	
VR Golf	Interplay	Golf		November 19	
VR Pool	Interplay	Pool		February 15, 1997	
VR Pro Pinball	Interplay	Pinball		October 24	
VR Soccer	Interplay	Soccer		November 15	
Werewolf: The Apocalypse	Capcom	Fighting		March 15, 1997	
World Wide Soccer '97	Sega	Soccer		October 29	
WWF: In Your House	Acclaim	Fighting		November 21	
3-Decathlon	Virgin	Sports		November	
<b>SNES</b>					
Brunswick: Tournament Of Champs	THQ	Bowling		May 1997	
College Football USA 97	THQ	Football		November 15	
Donkey Kong Country 3	Nintendo	Adventure		November 18	
Mario Paint	Nintendo	Edutainment		October 14	
Maui Mallard	Nintendo	Side-scroller		November 11	
MSH War of Gems	Capcom	N/A		November 20	
NBA Hangtime	Midway Home Ent.	Basketball		November 4	
NHL '97	THQ	Hockey		October 15	
Pinocchio	Nintendo	Side-scroller		November 11	
PTO II	KOEI	Shooter		October	
Sim City 2000	THQ	Strategy		October 15	
Star Wars	Nintendo	Shooter		November 11	
Street Fighter Alpha 2	Nintendo	Fighting		November 4	
Toy Story	Nintendo	Side-scroller		October 14	
Ultimate MK3	Midway Home Ent.	Fighting		October 11	
Urban Strike	THQ	Action/Shooter		October	

P = Previewed

**51**  
OCT  
1996

VIDEOGAME ADVISOR

# PREVIEWS

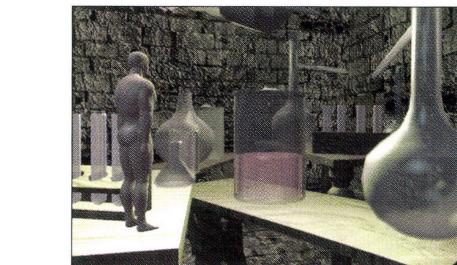
## The Incredible Shrinking Man

**Platform:** Win 95 CD  
**Genre:** Quest  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Cyberdreams  
**Developer:** Go-Go Interactive  
**Available:** 4th Quarter

**Written by:** Greg Angelo

Seeking to market an original product unlike anything previously seen in the quest genre of PC games, Cyberdreams, in conjunction with Go-Go Interactive Productions, will bring *The Incredible Shrinking Man* to store shelves this quarter.

In the game, the player is hired as a detective to find the missing lab assistant of the eccentric Doctor Franklin. The player, however, finds that the doctor has tricked them into drinking an experimental shrinking



potion, and the remainder of the game is a race against time to find Dr. Franklin's missing lab assistant. They must, all the while, avoid such perils as angry house pets and secret passageways littered throughout Dr. Franklin's expansive estate, as well as locating the antidote to stop from shrinking into oblivion.

The game features the exploring freedom of six degrees of movement in a three-dimensional world. All

characters will be realistically polygon rendered, found throughout the game's ten levels of play, each uniquely designed to reflect the player's gradual shrinkage.

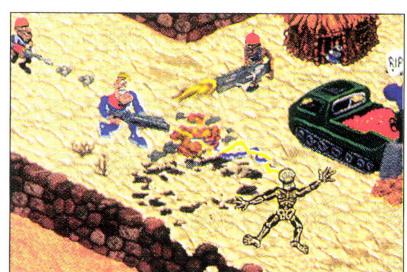
Cyberdreams current plans include: a good PR push, a heavy (consumer-based) print advertising campaign, and an even heavier online promotion - with cyber-ads appearing on the web's more heavily trafficked sites.

## Captain Quazar

**Platform:** PC CD  
**Genre:** Shooter  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Studio 3DO  
**Developer:** Studio 3DO  
**Available:** 1st Quarter 1997

**Written by:** Zach Meston

Now that The 3DO Company has completed their three-step plan of 1) completely abandoning their failed 32-bit platform, 2) acquiring several developers with hefty chunks of the \$100 million Matsushita paid them for their M2 technology, and 3) shifting focus to the PC and Internet, Trip Hawkins and Co. need to start puttin' out the hits - and they're starting by porting over their 3DO products, such as *Captain Quazar*, considered one of the best games for the now-dead system.



In several ways, *Quazar* reminds me of *Desert Strike* with a lantern-jawed soldier instead of a chopper. Like *Strike*, *Quazar* uses an angled overhead view; has three weapons with varying degrees of lethality; and has several mission goals in each of its massive levels. But *Captain Quazar* is an outstanding game on its own merits. The cartoonish graphics and animation are hilarious and the music by Burke Treischmann suits each scenario perfectly.

But it doesn't matter how good *Captain Quazar* is - and it's a darn fine shooter - if Studio 3DO can't convince gamers and retailers that they aren't just another ailing videogame company desperately expanding into the PC market to make a buck. 3DO might have some limited success with their first Internet-based product, the swords-and-sorcery-themed *Meridian 59*, but their 3DO ports - even the quality *Quazar* - are going to go unnoticed in the retail world.

# PREVIEWS

## Mega Man 8

**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Side-scroller  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Capcom  
**Developer:** Capcom  
**Available:** 1st Quarter '97

**Written by:** Zach Meston

One of the game industry's oldest (and, it must be amusingly noted, most effeminate) franchise characters, Mega Man, is finally coming to a 32-bit system. Mega Man 8 - and I'm glad Capcom's keeping track, because with all the 8-bit and 16-bit incarnations, I certainly don't have a dang clue - has the goes-down-smooth gameplay the series has featured for nearly ten years: jumping, running, shooting, and earning cool new weapons from bosses as you defeat them. You can also choose the order in



which you blast through the early levels. MM8's gameplay is perhaps TOO faithful to its prequels; the graphics and gameplay are pure 2D platforming, not even Crash Bandicoot's pseudo-3D. That's a problem, because Sony has a problem with games lacking cutting-edge 3D graphics.

No big shocker that, at press time, Sony had rejected Capcom's initial submission of Mega Man 8 as being too "16-bitty" in appearance. From a gamers perspective, this frustrates the hell out

of me; I don't care if a game is 2D, 3D, or 81D as long as it plays well. From a marketer's and retailer's perspective, I can see the problem: Sony wants games with eye candy to seduce casual gamers who don't have the appreciation for deep gameplay that hard-core gamers do. Capcom will surely get this game out the door - one of the perks of being perhaps Sony's most important third-party licensee - but it's silly that they'll have to jump through hoops before it ships.

## Super Puzzle Fighter

**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Puzzle  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Capcom  
**Developer:** Capcom  
**Available:** January '97

**Written by:** Zach Meston

Just when I think that Capcom has finally exhausted every possible variation on the Street Fighter series - much like I've managed to use the same joke about Blueberry Pop-Tarts for the past four years in various magazines - they come through again. But this latest variation is, I think, their smartest move yet: combining the everlasting appeal of Street Fighter with the everlasting appeal of Tetris.

Super Puzzle Fighter has one or two players dropping colored puzzle pieces



into place while adorable super-deformed version of characters from Street Fighter and Darkstalkers duke it out in the middle of the screen. There's much more strategy here than in the usual puzzle game, thanks in part to a "combo" and "counter" system that makes for as much back-and-forth action in this game as there is in a typical round of SF II.

The only potential flaw is that, whether because of its complexity or its "violence," Super Puzzle Fighter

doesn't seem to have the female appeal than most action/puzzle games do; my Bust-A-Move-adoring girlfriend, for example, liked it about as much as she likes my KISS posters. But the coin-op version is currently doing great biz, and the PlayStation conversion is amazingly exact; our alpha version had several characters and most of the gameplay in place. With its only competitor being Jaleco's weak Tetris Plus, Super Puzzle Fighter is guaranteed to be a hit.

# PREVIEWS

## Virtual Pool

**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Pool Simulation  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Interplay Productions  
**Developer:** Celeris, Inc.  
**Available:** TBD

**Written by:** Chris Hudak

This title takes the obvious yet revolutionary step of recognizing that pool is a game of perspective - that overhead-view stuff is fine if you're sitting on your butt watching ESPN, but almost no pool player ever sees the table that way. In Virtual Pool, the table and balls are presented as 3-D objects, which can be rotated and viewed from any angle, just as if you were hunkering down over the cue... preparing to make a fine cut.

Developed by Celeris, who former-



ly designed submarine tracking software for the military, VP has the most realistic physics ever presented in a pool game, featuring english, massé shots, true simultaneous collisions and a projected-course option which indicates every ball affected during a shot. About the only notable difference between versions comes in the 'power meter,' which takes the place of actual forward hand-motion on the PC/Mac mouse - this determines the robustness of the cue stick's strike on

the cue ball, and on the PlayStation pad admittedly takes some getting used to.

The PC/Mac versions were so realistic that they came with a money-back guarantee if your real-world game did not improve as a result of your virtual practice!

VP has been hailed throughout the videogame industry as a world-class product, and its high regard and healthy sales are likely to continue with the console version.

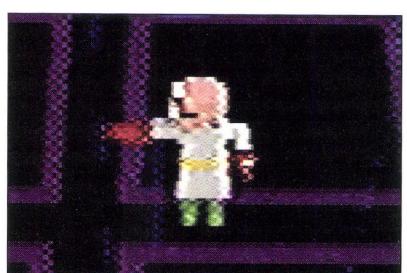
## Robotron X

**Platform:** PlayStation  
**Genre:** Shooter  
**Size:** CD  
**Publisher:** Williams  
**Developer:** Player One  
**Available:** December

**Written by:** Matt Harding

With the retro-gaming fad hitting an all-time peak, it's only natural for Williams to dig up one of the most intense shooters ever made, Robotron 2084, and give it a new coat of paint.

Robotron X is a 3-D update of the relentlessly fast and intense original arcade title. The hundreds of tiny little sprites have been converted to polygons and the overhead perspective has been moved to a fancy, floating camera. But sadly, the ori-



gional's flawless play mechanics (which some hotly debate, make it one of the greatest videogames of all time) were sacrificed, somewhere along the line, in the name of aesthetics. Gamers have come to expect a certain level of graphics from their 32-bit titles, but the age-old rule of "never sacrifice gameplay for graphics" must be taken into consideration.

Even with the PlayStation's processing power, the number of on-

screen enemies has been drastically reduced by the demands of the textured characters. And the moving camera quickly becomes a nuisance (as it sometimes does in Super Mario 64), because much of what the player needs to see (in order to survive) is pushed out of frame.

While certainly not of its predecessor's quality in terms of gameplay, our early version of Robotron X was still fun to play. Hopefully, the review version will be enhanced.

# PREVIEWS

## Blood & Magic

<b>Platform:</b>	PC
<b>Genre:</b>	Strategy
<b>Size:</b>	CD
<b>Publisher:</b>	Interplay
<b>Developer:</b>	Tachyon Studios
<b>Available:</b>	December

**Written by:** Gregory Angelo

The strategy game genre seems to have been reborn in the past year, with numerous releases by major publishers each claiming their respective positions on retail top seller lists - few of them accurately. Interplay vies for their respective market share late this year with their release of *Blood & Magic*, the first strategy simulation to be released utilizing the formidable and well-respected Dungeons and Dragons license.



Placing a varied array of soldiers and weaponry at the player's disposal - including skeleton armies, rock creatures, and even dragons - players navigate through the game, engaging in battle sequences ranging from straight military campaigns to more discreet assassinations.

Aside from the Dungeons and Dragons license, the main draw of this title is the involving and complex plot - an ingredient missing from most other strategy titles. The

game contains five separate storylines, each involving (in its own respect), taking the player through various regions in each of *Blood & Magic*'s five realms of battlefields.

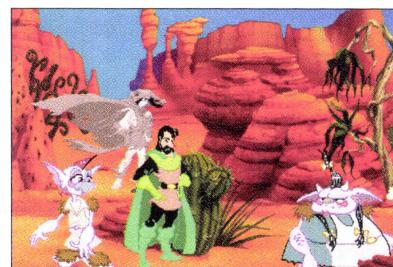
Interplay did extremely well marketing their RPG smash hit *Stonekeep* last year, proving that medieval fantasy genre is far from a dead. Similar marketing and sales support for *Blood & Magic* could make this game another Interplay hit.

## King's Quest

<b>Platform:</b>	PC
<b>Genre:</b>	3D Action/Adventure
<b>Size:</b>	CD
<b>Publisher:</b>	Sierra On-Line
<b>Developer:</b>	Sierra On-Line
<b>Available:</b>	Q1 '97

**Written by:** Chris Hudak

After a number of popular, animated (and in some cases rather flawed) *King's Quest* games, designer Roberta Williams has decided to shake up the system and return to her pure game-playing roots: *King's Quest: The Mask of Eternity* takes the radical departure of presenting a fully-navigable 3D world in the vein of *Mario 64*. Players can travel everywhere in an open-ended world, entering rooms within rooms, interacting with polygonal friends and



foes in a third-person perspective (with the option of a first-person toggle). As a direct result, the feel and gameplay are much edgier and action-oriented, much less dictated by storyline demands.

Surprisingly enough, the previous protagonists, King Graham and his kin, are also nowhere to be seen. The hero this time around is a young character named Conner, the sole survivor of a magical debacle, who must locate the pieces of a leg-

endary mask that will save the people of his world (who, incidentally, have been turned to stone). The full extent of the overhaul to the Kingdom of Daventry is unclear at this stage of the game, but Sierra hopes to expand the appeal of the best-selling *King's Quest* by drawing in the sizable fan base of 3D action titles.



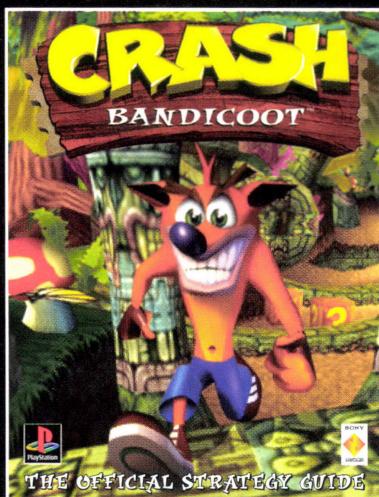
## Stock updates of the top videogame industry manufacturers and retailers



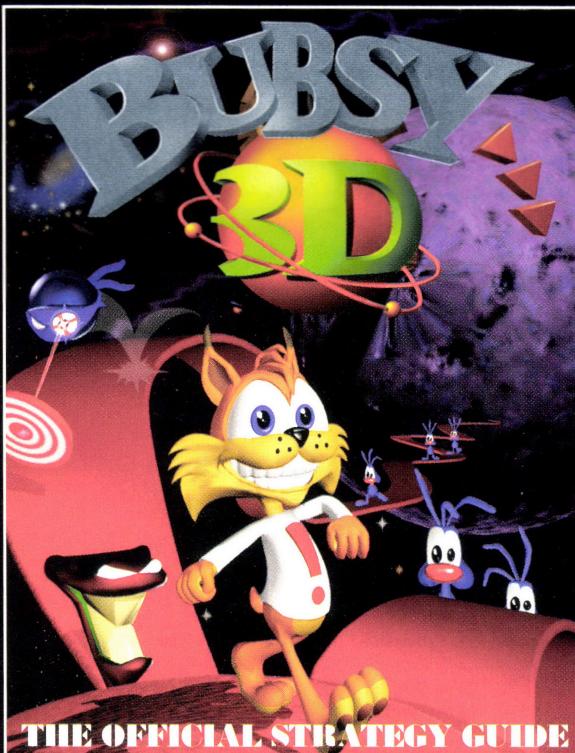
Company	Symbol	Closing Price		Annual	
		9/9/96	9/16/96	High	Low
3DO	THDO	8.00	8.00	13.75	7.37
Acclaim	AKLM	8.50	7.88	28.62	7.00
Activision	ATVI	12.88	13.88	20.12	8.00
Apple Computer	AAPL	22.63	21.94	45.50	16.00
Creative Prog. & Tech. Ventures	CPTV	0.44	1.00	2.00	0.18
Disney	DIS	57.13	61.38	69.87	52.62
Electronic Arts	ERTS	32.63	35.50	42.25	21.12
Game Tek	GAME	1.75	1.50	3.75	0.87
GT Interactive	GTIS	21.75	20.50	26.75	8.87
Matsushita	MC	166.00	166.50	188.0	140.00
Microsoft	MSFT	122.56	132.0	126.12	79.87
Sony Corp.	SNE	62.63	63.25	66.62	45.50
Spectrum Holobyte	SBYT	4.88	6.00	18.75	3.75
Symantec	SYMC	9.38	10.00	33.25	8.75
T-HQ	TOYH	5.81	7.00	6.75	2.62
Time Warner	TWX	33.75	37.75	42.25	29.75
ThrustMaster	TMSR	5.13	5.50	9.37	3.50
Viacom	VIA	32.75	35.63	54.12	29.62
Ames Stores	AMES	3.00	3.31	3.56	1.12
Best Buy	BB	18.38	18.38	20.62	17.87
Bradlees	BLE	1.25	1.38	2.50	1.00
Circuit City	CC	31.88	34.88	38.75	25.00
Egg Head	EGGS	8.00	6.38	13.87	5.00
Good Guys	GGUY	8.38	8.00	13.62	7.25
Hills Stores	HDS	7.50	8.00	13.75	6.87
K Mart	KM	10.25	10.13	15.0	5.75
Staples	SPLS	18.50	20.00	21.62	12.62
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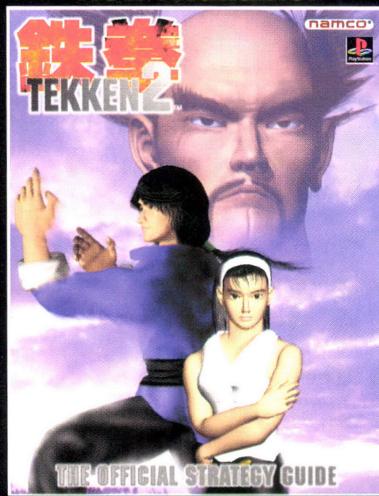
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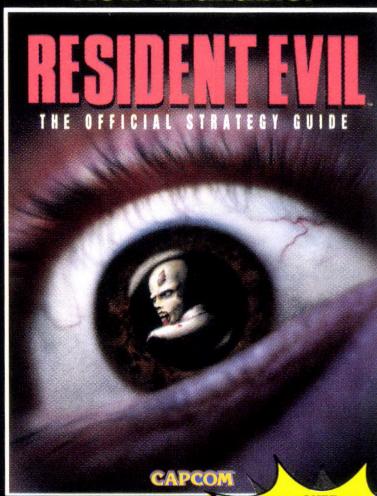
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- Software Specialty Retailer
- Consumer Electronics Retailer
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- Toy Retailer
- Discount Store
- Warehouse Club
- Office Superstore
- Department/Mass Merchandiser

**NON-RETAIL**

- Sub-distributor/Rack Jobber
- Distributor/Dealer/Wholesaler
- Software/Hardware Manufacturer
- Software Distributor
- Manufacturers Representative
- Media
- Finance/Investments
- Research/Analyst
- Educational/Library
- Consultant
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which title best describes your job function?

- Executive Management/Purchasing
- Marketing/PR/Advertising
- Research & Development
- Sales
- Merchandising
- Store/Department Manager
- Assistant Manager
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which of the following does your company offer?

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- Nintendo 64
- Genesis
- Sega CD
- 32X
- Saturn
- PlayStation
- Jaguar/Jag CD
- 3DO
- M2
- Neo Geo (NG-CD)
- CD-I
- Mac-CD
- PC-CD
- Imported
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Hardware**

- SNES
- Nintendo 64
- Genesis
- Sega CD
- 32X
- Saturn
- PlayStation
- Jaguar/Jag CD
- 3DO
- M2
- Neo Geo (NG-CD)
- CD-I
- Mac-CD
- PC-CD
- Imported
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Other**

- Video Tapes
- DVD
- Candy
- Trading Cards
- Laser Discs
- Audio CD's/ Records
- Magazines/Comics
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which best describes your business location?

- Corporate Headquarters
- Regional/District Site/Office Chain
- Local Retail Site
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Total number of retail locations:

- None
- 1
- 2-4
- 5-9
- 10-24
- 25-49
- 50-99
- 100 or more

5. Number of employees:

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- 10-19
- 20-49
- 50-54
- 55-99
- 100-249
- 250-499
- 500 or more

6. Do you personally influence or authorize electronic entertainment product purchases for your company?

- Yes
- No

7. If yes, what do you base your decision on?

- Advertising (Trade/Consumer)
- Advice from Reps/Distributors
- Trade/Consumer Magazine Articles
- Sales Person Requests
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which of the following On-line services are you a member of?

- AOL
- Compuserve
- E-World
- Genie
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Prodigy
- Delphi
- Netcom
- Microsoft Network

13. Which of the following publications do you personally receive?

<b>A. Trade</b>	<b>B. Consumer</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Ent. News	<input type="checkbox"/> Comp. Gaming Wor.
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Retail News	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Player
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Retail Wkly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Edge
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Trade Wkly.	<input type="checkbox"/> EGM/EGM2
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily Variety	<input type="checkbox"/> Flux
<input type="checkbox"/> Dealerscope Mer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Game Fan
<input type="checkbox"/> GameWEEK	<input type="checkbox"/> Game Informer
<input type="checkbox"/> Multimedia Mer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Game Pro
<input type="checkbox"/> Playthings	<input type="checkbox"/> Next Generation
<input type="checkbox"/> Toy Book	<input type="checkbox"/> Nintendo Power
<input type="checkbox"/> TWICE	<input type="checkbox"/> PC Gamer
<input type="checkbox"/> Variety	<input type="checkbox"/> PC Games
<input type="checkbox"/> Video Business	<input type="checkbox"/> PS Extreme
<input type="checkbox"/> Video Software	<input type="checkbox"/> PSX
<input type="checkbox"/> Video Store	<input type="checkbox"/> Ultra Game Players

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October			November
<b>1-3 East Coast Video Show</b> Atlantic City, NJ 203.256.4700	<b>9-12 Fun Expo</b> Las Vegas, Nevada 914.993.9200	<b>31-Nov 2 National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA)</b> ST. Louis, Missouri 312.346.0370	<b>1-4 E3/Tokyo '96</b> Makuhari Messe (Nippon Convention Center) Tokyo, Japan 415.697.5900
<b>8-10 CES Mexico '96</b> Mexico City, Mexico 703-907-7600	<b>27-28 Amusement &amp; Music Operators of Virginia</b> 804.748.2092		

## CONSUMER PUBLICATIONS

WE READ 'EM SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



Product Title	Manufacturer	Platform	Magazine	Issue	Rating
Decathlete	Sega	Saturn	Next Generation	October	B
Cat Fight	Atlantean	PC	Next Generation	October	F
Judge Dredd	Acclaim	PC	PC Gamer	October	F
Micro Machines 2	GameTek	PC	PC Gamer	October	B-
Pilot Wings 64	Nintendo	N64	Intelligent Gamer	September	A-
Hoyle Blackjack	Sierra On-line	PC	PC Games	October	C
Grand Prix II	MicroProse	PC	PC Games	October	B+
College Football USA '97	EA Sports	Genesis	GamePro	October	B
Project Horned Owl	SCEA	PlayStation	GamePro	October	C
Ridge Racer Revolution	Namco	PlayStation	Ultra Game Players	October	B-

Products and magazines featured are selected by the Publisher.

# OFFICIAL

## VGA/NPD TRSTS REPORT

### Top 25 Best Selling Video Game Titles

Ranked On Units Sold "August, 1996"

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1996

VIDEOGAME ADVISOR

Last Month	Rank	Title	Platform	Publisher	Average Retail Price
**	1	Tekken 2	Sony Playstation	Namco	\$48
2	2	Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$65
5	3	Super Mario Kart	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$33
4	4	Triple Play '97	Sony Playstation	Electronic Arts	\$50
1	5	Ken Griffey Junior's Winning Run	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$63
3	6	Resident Evil	Sony Playstation	Capcom	\$55
6	7	Donkey Kong Country 2	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$57
9	8	Killer Instinct	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$32
**	9	Namco Museum Volume 1	Sony Playstation	Namco	\$48
**	10	Nights with 3D Control Pad	Saturn	Sega of America	\$68
8	11	Ms. Pacman	Genesis	Williams Entertainment	\$17
**	12	Tetris Attack	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$34
7	13	Need for Speed	Sony Playstation	Electronic Arts	\$51
**	14	World Series Baseball '96	Genesis	Sega of America	\$55
19	15	NFL GameDay	Sony Playstation	Sony Computer Ent.	\$48
12	16	NBA Jam Tournament Edition	Super Nintendo	Acclaim Entertainment	\$24
**	17	Lufia II	Super Nintendo	Natsume	\$77
18	18	Taz 2: Escape from Mars	Genesis	Sega of America	\$21
15	19	Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$58
20	20	Batman Forever	Super Nintendo	Acclaim Entertainment	\$29
24	21	NBA Jam Tournament Edition	Genesis	Acclaim Entertainment	\$25
25	22	Twisted Metal	Sony Playstation	Sony Computer Ent.	\$49
**	23	6 in 1 Cartridge	Genesis	Sega of America	\$50
**	24	World Series Baseball 2	Saturn	Sega of America	\$62
**	25	Fade to Black	Sony Playstation	Electronic Arts	\$54

\*\*Not in Top 25 Last Month

Source: The NPD TRSTS Video Game Tracking Service - 9,388 outlets across the U.S.  
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THE NPD GROUP, INC.  
CUSTOM & SYNDICATED RESEARCH

# Top 10 Entertainment Titles

Ranked On Unit Sales, "July, 1996"

Rank	Last Month	Title	Platform	Publisher	Average Retail Price
1	1	Duke Nukem 3D	(CD DOS)	Formgem	\$42
2	2	Warcraft 2	(CD DOS)	Davidson	\$44
3	3	Civilization 2	(CD WIN)	Microprose (Spectrum Holobyte)	\$47
4	67	Final Doom	(CD DOS)	GT Interactive	\$44
5	6	Warcraft 2 Eep Pak	(CD W95)	Davidson	\$29
6	8	Command & Conquer	(CD DOS)	Virgin Interactive	\$47
7	9	Return Of Arcade	(W95 3.5)	Microsoft	\$30
8	5	Longbow	(CD DOS)	Electric Atrs	\$46
9	7	Duke Nukem 3D S/W	(CD DOS)	Formgem	\$12
10	*	Ms Close Combat	(CD W95)	Microsoft	\$39

\* Not in Top 100 Last Month

Source: The NPD SoftTrends Service - From Over 8,823 Stores

# Top 10 Best Selling Video Game Titles

Based On Items Introduced In 1996 Only

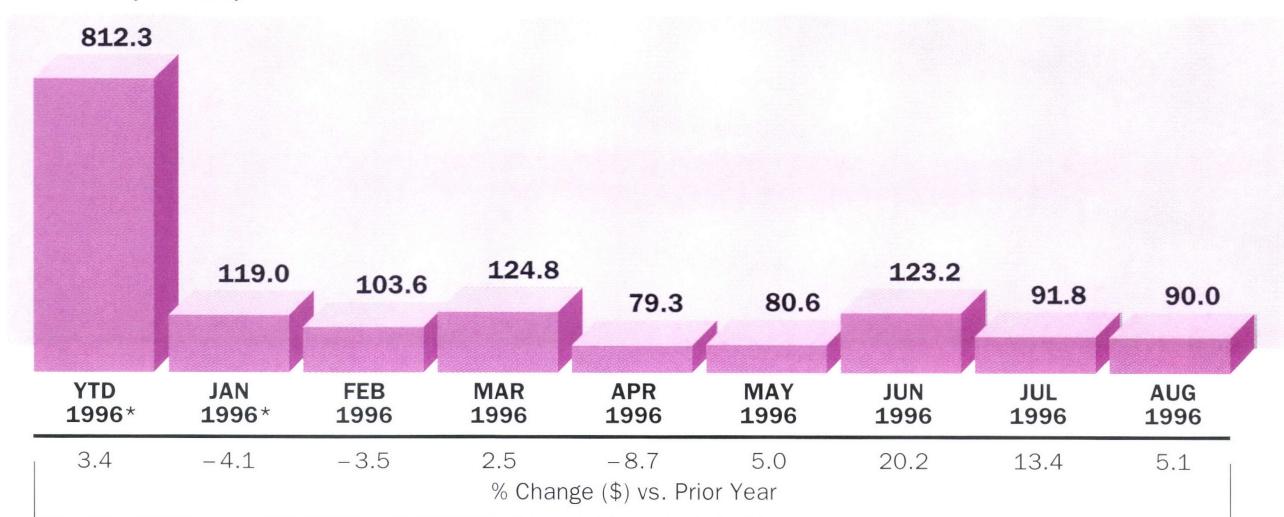
Ranked On Units "August, 1996"

Rank	Title	Platform	Publisher	Average Retail Price
1	Tekken 2	Sony Playstation	Namco	\$48
2	Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$65
3	Triple Play '97	Sony Playstation	Electronic Arts	\$50
4	Ken Griffey Junior's Winning Run	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$63
5	Resident Evil	Sony Playstation	Capcom	\$55
6	Namco Museum Volume 1	Sony Playstation	Namco	\$48
7	Nights with 3D Control Pad	Saturn	Sega of America	\$68
8	Tetris Attack	Super Nintendo	Nintendo	\$34
9	Need for Speed	Sony Playstation	Electronic Arts	\$51
10	World Series Baseball '96	Genesis	Sega of America	\$55

Source: The NPD TRSTS Video Game Tracking Service - 9,388 outlets across the U.S.  
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# Total TRSTS Video Game Market

In Dollars (Millions)



Source: The NPD Group

63

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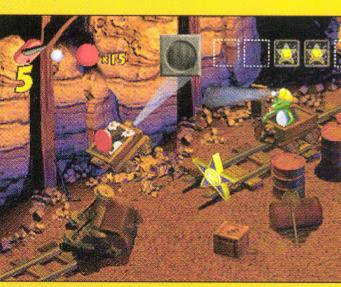


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